

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

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### EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Home Secretary has appointed a Committee "to inquire into the law and practice regarding offences against the criminal law in connection with prostitution and solicitation for immoral purposes in streets and public places, and other offences against decency and good order, and to report what changes, if any, are in their opinion desirable." Mr. Hugh Macmillan, K.C., will preside over the Committee, which is an exceptionally strong body, including Sir Chartres Biron (the Bow Street magistrate), Sir Leonard Dunning (Inspector of Constabulary), the Bishop of Durham, Miss S. Margery Fry, Mr. W. A. Jowitt, K.C.,

and Lady Joynson-Hicks. The terms of reference are commendably wide, and they will enable the Committee to review, not merely the conduct of the police in connection with alleged offences against public decency, but broader questions of policy with respect to this branch of the law and its administration. Since we referred in these notes a few weeks ago to the issues raised by the quashing at the London Sessions of two police-court convictions, our correspondence columns have borne witness to widespread uneasiness and dissatisfaction regarding the present practice of bringing charges of that type on uncorroborated police evidence; and we are glad that Sir William Joynson-Hicks has seen the importance of a thorough investigation. He has been criticized in some quarters for appointing a committee instead of taking action on his own initiative, but in a matter which may require a change in the law, a change in the attitude of magistrates, an alteration in police procedure, or all three, it seems eminently reasonable to take advice.

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Mr. Ronald McNeill has been appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and a member of the Cabinet in succession to Lord Cecil. Mr. McNeill is popular in the House of Commons, and is said to have shown ability as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, but we read with dismay that "it is expected that he, like Lord Cecil, will pay special attention to the development of the League of Nations." Mr. McNeill was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs when France was invading the Ruhr, and he repeatedly went out of his way in public utterances to encourage that disastrous adventure, when his official chief and the Prime Minister were denouncing it. This does not indicate a mentality or an outlook on international politics which would make a favourable impression at Geneva, and we cannot congratulate Mr. Baldwin on his choice. It is difficult to retain confidence in the foreign policy of a Cabinet which loses Lord Cecil and gains Mr. Ronald McNeill.

\* \* \* \*

In a letter to a Glasgow correspondent, Mr. Philip Snowden has made the following reference to the proposed surtax:—

"I have had nothing to do with preparing this scheme, but I take it that it is more a general idea than a detailed plan. We have the assurance of the promoters that the Inland Revenue have estimated the yield from the taxation of personal incomes at eighty-five millions. If that is not the case, then the scheme breaks down."

In using the phrase which we have italicized, Mr. Snowden clearly rules out the taxation of company reserves. But, as we have pointed out, the estimate of the Inland Revenue upon which the promoters of the surtax rely was based upon "investment income" which includes these reserves, and an initial reduction of £22 millions must therefore be made on account of

these. Furthermore, the promoters have repeatedly stated that under their scheme the first £500 of unearned income will be exempt from the surtax, and the statement by the Inland Revenue Department which we published in our issue of September 24th was that:—

"The estimate of £85 millions, quoted by the Minority Report of the Colwyn Committee as the estimate of the yield of a restoration of the standard rate of tax upon investment income only to the level of 6s. in the £, would have to be substantially reduced, if the first £500 of investment income were in all cases exempted."

Thus the estimate of £85 millions must be reduced to £63 millions if only "personal incomes" are to be taxed, and this sum must be "substantially reduced" (we estimate by at least another £23 millions) by the exemption of the first £500. Therefore, by Mr. Snowden's test, "the scheme breaks down."

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The results of the working of the coal industry for the first three months of the present year were made public last week by the Mines Department. A profit is shown of just under £8.5 millions, but this, in view of the exceptional circumstances of the quarter—a demand temporarily stimulated by the starvation of industry during the stoppage of 1926, and selling prices correspondingly enhanced—is not particularly encouraging. It seems, unfortunately, to be almost certain that results for the remainder of the year will not be nearly as favourable. During the March quarter 63.3 million tons of coal were raised, of which 58.2 million tons were disposed of commercially; the net costs of production averaged 16s. 1.92d. per ton, and the price realized 17s. 4.33d. per ton. There was thus a margin of almost 1s. 2½d. per ton profit. This compares with a loss during the first quarter of 1926, when the subsidy was still in operation, of about 1s. 6d. per ton. The improved result was made possible, not only by an increase in selling price (averaging 1s. 7d. per ton) but by a marked increase in output per man-shift, which averaged 20.66 cwt. as compared with 18.46 cwt. in the first quarter of 1926. Earnings per man-shift were higher than a year ago, but in nothing like the same proportion—10s. 7.12d., as compared with 10s. 4.79d.: this means that wages per ton of coal sold averaged 11s. 1.85d., as against 12s. 3.88d. in 1926. Finally it should be noted that the number of workpeople employed was only 970,000 as against 1,075,000 during the first quarter of 1926. The tendencies by which the present problems of the industry are characterized—increasingly severe competition, a narrowing margin between selling prices and costs, falling wages, and a diminishing volume of employment—are clearly brought out in these statistics.

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At the present moment the coal strike in Westphalia seems to be a purely industrial affair without political background. Whether it will be settled as an industrial dispute remains to be seen. The brown coal exports from Germany are small in comparison with the internal consumption, which amounted, in 1922, to nearly fifty million tons, and was rising with the industrial recovery of the country. For this very reason the dispute is difficult to settle. The German Press of all shades of opinion seems agreed that the miners' demand for higher wages is reasonable; but no way has yet been discovered of giving higher wages and keeping the selling price of coal at its present level. A rise in the cost of domestic coal, just as the winter is beginning, will affect the delicately balanced budgets of millions of hardworking Germans, and as every dispute in present-day Germany has a tendency to affiliate itself to the Royalist-Republican controversy, it is

hardly surprising that the Government are hesitating. They are thinking more of the future than of the present.

\* \* \*

We are apt to forget that, owing to the refusal of the Lithuanian Government to acquiesce in the Polish occupation of Vilna, a "state of war" has technically prevailed between Poland and Lithuania since 1920. Lithuania, of course, is quite unable to fight her powerful neighbour; but a boycott exists which has long been inconvenient and injurious to both countries. October 9th, the anniversary of the seizure of Vilna, was duly celebrated as a day of rejoicing in Poland and of mourning in Lithuania. Meanwhile, the Polish Press, probably excited by the proposal of the Lithuanian Government to embody in the new Constitution a solemn declaration that Vilna is the national capital, had accused the Lithuanian authorities of closing Polish minority schools and interning the teachers. Immediate reprisals were carried out; the Lithuanian Government denied the allegations, and Marshal Pilsudski insisted on a modification of the repressive measures taken at Vilna. Lithuania has now appealed to the League on the ground that the Polish Government have been guilty of acts calculated to disturb world peace. The problem, which dates back to the days of the Council of Ambassadors, is likely to tax to the full the powers of the League, but we hope it will be firmly tackled, not merely shelved.

\* \* \*

The persistent reports of negotiations between the Vatican and the Fascist Government have been substantiated by a recent article from the pen of Signor Arnaldo Mussolini, the brother of the Dictator. The Vatican, however, is very reserved, and has given no hint whatsoever of the conditions it will attempt to secure. If the Fascist Government is only prepared to grant the Vatican the ownership of the apostolic palaces instead of the mere use of them, the negotiations will probably break down; for the Papal See certainly desires to have the juridical status of a sovereign State. The late Pope, for instance, attempted to obtain the right of representation on the League of Nations. This claim will probably be dropped; but the claim that diplomatic representatives to the Papal See shall be accommodated on Vatican, instead of Italian, soil will certainly be pressed. As there is no real chance of a revival of the claims to temporal power, the grant of a titular territorial sovereignty would have no practical effect on European politics; but a governing faction whose principal war cry is the unity of Italy, will not be very willing to make concessions on this point and the bargaining is likely to be long and strenuous.

\* \* \*

In no country is the control of news more drastic than in Mexico, and the censorship doubtless is responsible for the virtual silence of the cables since President Calles announced the suppression of the military revolt. It is not possible that Mexico can be tranquil, or even free from violent conflict. Civil war has been raging, notably in the North and West, in consequence of the attack upon the Church and the rerudescence of guerilla fighting, especially in the North-Western State of Sonora; and, since the two presidential candidates opposing General Obregon have been made away with, the approaching general election can be nothing but a chapter of military dictatorship. President Calles must retire, but there is no reason to doubt that he and General Obregon, who is to be the new President, are in control of the situation. The question is whether it will be possible for the next Administration to continue the work of the Calles Government, which, all things

considered, has been remarkable. The majority opinion has been plainly for it, very strongly so in the case of the nationalization of mining rights and the distribution of the large estates. But radical social policies are not carried out by military chiefs.

\* \* \*

Seven or eight months have still to pass before the candidates are chosen in the United States for the presidential election of November, 1928, but aspirants on both sides are rapidly coming forward. The latest Democratic champion to offer himself is Senator James Reed of Missouri. He is against Prohibition, the debt settlements, and Britain; in international affairs he is an ultra-isolationist. For the progressive Republicans there is a suggestion that Senator Norris of Nebraska, a genuine radical, should be nominated. He will not be. Neither will Senator Reed, nor Senator Borah. These men are all lost among the machine politicians of the two parties. The most wholesome event of the campaign so far is an outspoken utterance by Dr. Nicholas M. Butler, President of Columbia University. Candidates for the Presidency, says Dr. Butler, are trying to creep up to office by the avoidance of real issues. There is a great need for a renaissance of reflective thinking. Politicians in the forthcoming election should be forced to declare themselves on Prohibition, farmers' relief, and international co-operation for peace. They should; but the party machines will make sure that they do not. Senator Borah at any rate does not dodge Prohibition. He is for it, and says so.

\* \* \*

The Australian Light Cruiser "Adelaide" has been dispatched to the Solomon Islands, as the result of the recent murder by natives of two British officials, fifteen native police, and the crew of a Government vessel. The Australian Labour Party has shown some anxiety as to the "Adelaide's" instructions, and Mr. Bruce has explained that operations are being conducted by the police and locally controlled troops, under the direction of the Civil Government, for the arrest of the murderers, and that the "Adelaide's" seamen and marines will be used to protect the base of operations and afford moral support, but will not be employed in active punitive measures. The incident at Malaita was a nasty one; for the Solomon Islands contain a small, scattered, white population, and some 150,000 Melanesians, the majority of whom are extremely primitive, and not long weaned from head-hunting. In recent years, however, murders have grown more and more infrequent, and missionaries of long experience have suggested that the present outbreak was due to an attempt to collect from the more savage tribes taxes which they did not understand, and which were not applied in ways, such as the provision of a medical service, visibly for their benefit. If this be true, the case against anything like general punitive reprisals is very strong.

\* \* \*

An event which promises to facilitate the new movement towards industrial peace has recently occurred in the building industry. For three years, collective organization among the building trade unions has been in a state approaching chaos owing to the secession of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers from the National Federation. The Amalgamated Union is composed of the bricklayers' and stonemasons' unions, and these key grades assumed that, in view of their strategic position, playing a lone hand would be more profitable, and that in particular they could thus force the issue of payment for time lost through wet weather. The employers, however, have resolutely refused to recognize the Amalgamated

Union as a body of equal status with the National Federation. So-called national agreements have been concluded with the latter, though in fact the bricklayers and stonemasons were not parties to them. But the position has been unsatisfactory and dangerous, and it is good news that the Amalgamated Union has decided to rejoin the Federation. Probably the General Council of the Trades Union Congress should receive some praise for this event, since it is almost certain that it has been active in the matter, though behind the scenes. It is to be hoped, however, that this reunion will be marked by a real step forward with the insurance scheme for wet weather payments, for though the Amalgamated Union's method of hastening matters was objectionable, this reform is, as we have often said, long overdue.

\* \* \*

The announcement that the Cambridgeshire Education Committee has approved the project of a "village college" at Sawston, a large village some seven miles from Cambridge, is of more than local interest. The proposal to establish such "colleges," which originated with Mr. Henry Morris, the County Education Secretary, has been under discussion for some time. Its underlying idea is the necessity of grouping, about some accessible centre, such educational activities as can be provided for adolescents and adults in rural areas; buildings, equipment, and books can there be made available under conditions which ensure their effective use; and the whole of the activities carried on can be co-ordinated by a resident "Warden" who will be generally responsible for the college and its administration. The Board of Education have given their approval to Mr. Morris's scheme, the Carnegie Trustees are helping to finance it, and the authorities of the University of Cambridge are taking an active interest in its development. Should the College justify the hopes entertained of it, the possibilities of stimulating rural life on its educational and social sides will prove to have definitely widened.

\* \* \*

Dr. Logan, the woman doctor who claimed to have swum the Channel last week, has now announced that her story was a hoax. In fact, she was in the water for less than two hours on Monday night, and for rather longer on Tuesday morning, having accomplished most of the journey in a motor-boat. But the lady and her trainer both seem to have lied with great gallantry and perseverance, and they profess to have done so in order to establish the need for the supervision of Channel swimming by expert umpires. With this noble object in view, Dr. Logan is said to have signed a declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act, "conscientiously believing the same to be true"; yet she informed a journalist that she "cast no aspersions on any swimmer of any nationality," and asked him to "tell Miss Gleitze that I am perfectly certain of her *bona fides*, and I would be frightfully distressed if she should feel impelled to attempt another Channel swim at this time of the year as a result of my rather unconventional way of calling attention to the need for official supervision of Channel swimming." We are inclined to think that "rather unconventional" is too mild a phrase.

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We publish this week a manifesto signed by Sir Charles Hobhouse on behalf of the National Liberal Federation and by the Presidents of two kindred organizations. This document gives admirable expression to a policy on disarmament, arbitration, and international economics upon which all British Liberals should be united.

## MR. SHAW AND MUSSOLINI

YOUNG Britain owes more than perhaps it realizes to Mr. Bernard Shaw. His gay and gallant, if perverse, pen has been one of the most formidable controversial weapons of the past forty years; and Mr. Shaw has employed it, with an instinct that has rarely failed, in attacking what chiefly needed to be attacked—the pompous complacencies and self-righteous prejudices which sheltered the real abuses and oppressions of the time. We doubt if any man of our age has served more effectively in so many fields the cause of emancipation, and enlightenment, and decency. His influence upon contemporary thought has been immense; and not the least of his services has been his habit of turning round every now and then upon himself. No nonsense is more insufferable to Mr. Shaw than the nonsense of his partisans, unless it be his own nonsense, which it must be owned has been plentiful enough, retailed witlessly by his partisans as the profoundest wisdom. Mr. Shaw has seldom endured the repetition long before subjecting it to his most devastating sarcasm. This habit, we say, has exerted a healthy influence. By force of example, it has done more to induce controversialists to cultivate a measure of restraint and self-criticism and good sense than could have been done by any express advocacy of those qualities. With Mr. Shaw about, it has been difficult for the most intoxicated sectarian to avoid asking himself at times, "Am I not beginning to talk outrageous nonsense?"

But this habit has its dangers, and Mr. Shaw has become, perhaps, too fond of entertaining the world by perplexing his friends. In his latest escapade—his eulogy of Mussolini, his defence of the Fascist regime, and his scornful indifference for the sufferers from that regime—we miss both the realism on which he prides himself and the sureness of sympathy on which it is usually safer to rely. Mr. Shaw, it appears, was moved in the first instance by a dislike of the practice of "cocking snooks" at Mussolini, and sought, accordingly, to demand

"common sense and common civility in dealing with a foreign statesman who had achieved a dictatorship in a great modern State without a single advantage, social, official, or academic, to assist him, after marching to Rome with a force of Black Shirts which a single disciplined regiment, backed by a competent Government, could have routed at any moment."

The general tenour of his argument will, perhaps, be sufficiently conveyed by quoting two further passages from his letter to Dr. Adler:—

"Are we to give him credit for his work and admit its necessity and the hopeless failure of our *soi-disant* Socialists, Syndicalists, Communists, Anarchists, &c., to achieve it or even to understand it, or are we to go on shrieking that the murderer of liberty and Matteotti is trampling Italy underfoot?"

"Because I face the facts in the full knowledge that the democratic idealism of the nineteenth century is as dead as a door nail, you say that I come dangerously near the point of view of the British ruling class. But are you not delighted to find at last a Socialist who speaks and thinks as responsible rulers do and not as resentful slaves do? Of what use are Socialists who can neither rule nor understand what ruling means?"

Now in all this there is much that is characteristic of Mr. Shaw—the comparison between "responsible rulers" and "resentful slaves" strikes a familiar note

—but there is something that is highly uncharacteristic. We have come to expect from him a core of fundamental good sense, of a sort that is apt to be neglected and needs emphasizing, enclosed in some superficial nonsense. But in his *apologia* for Fascism the perversity is fundamental, and it is wrapped up in a few truths which are not only superficial but almost wearisomely commonplace. That Mussolini's seizure of power was a "remarkable" achievement, that it is sufficient to prove that he must be a remarkable man—who denies it, who doubts it, who has not read it and heard it and said it more times than he can remember? That the first duty of a Government is to govern, that the supreme law is the safety of the State, and that a threat of anarchy justifies strong measures, are again among our most familiar political platitudes. The question is whether the state of disorder in Italy before Fascism was so serious, and so incurable by ordinary means, as to justify the very exceptionally strong measures taken by Mussolini, and the peculiarly intolerant nature of the Fascist regime.

"Silly syndicalists," says Mr. Shaw, "were seizing factories, and fanatical devotees of that curious attempt at a new Catholic church called the Third International were preaching a *coup d'état* and crusade in all directions and imagining that this sort of thing was Socialism and Communism." But in most countries the war left behind it a rather similar condition of social unrest, which seemed formidable for a time; and most countries have succeeded in coming through it without finding it necessary to suppress freedom of speech and to destroy the essentials of civil liberty. All the evidence suggests that Italy too would have settled down in the ordinary course, and indeed was already beginning to do so before Mussolini and his Black Shirts marched to Rome. After all, the seizure of the factories had taken place some time previously, and had proved a ludicrous failure. No, we are not disposed to admit the "necessity" of Mussolini's work. Nor is this a type of necessity which Mr. Shaw is prone, as a rule, to admit uncritically. Just a little difference in the bias of his approach, and how finely he might have raged against the hysterical cowardice of the Italian *bourgeoisie* who were so terrified by a futile prank of "silly Syndicalists" that they must needs rush to place themselves under the heel of a megalomaniac dictator, and submit abjectly to a servitude such as no despot of the last century would have ventured to impose, content so long as they felt themselves secured against a Red peril, which they had not the courage or the sense to see had already passed away!

Just a little difference in Mr. Shaw's bias. For it is evident that he is largely moved by an old impatience with "Liberal shibboleths," and "the democratic idealism of the nineteenth century." Perhaps, indeed, we are wrong in treating his defence of Fascism as an unfortunate example of his practice of turning round upon himself. Perhaps it represents rather an unfortunate omission of that practice. He tells us himself that the democratic idealism he condemns is as dead as a door nail. Well, surely, Mr. Shaw, is above belabouring dead door nails. Disillusionment with democratic institutions is deep and widespread enough to-day to satisfy any sceptic. Few people now seriously

believe, although politicians may occasionally employ the traditional language, that the one thing that matters in political science is to ensure that Governments shall be perfectly amenable to Parliaments which shall constitute as nearly as possible an exact microcosm of the public mind. What we chiefly need to realize to-day is how much virtue still resides in the old democratic idea, when it is stripped of such exaggerations and absurdities; how strong is the case for Parliamentary institutions, and all the traditions associated with them, regarded merely as the most workmanlike instrument yet fashioned for the difficult business of governing mankind.

The Fascist regime in Italy violates principles of political wisdom which are far older and more firmly established than any "shibboleths" of the nineteenth century. In the first place, it denies the elements of what our ancestors, centuries ago, used to know and prize as "civil liberty." And civil liberty, even though men may only realize its value fully when it is denied them, is a very real and important thing, which, indeed, no society, except one of "resentful slaves," can long endure to be without. A healthy State requires not only "responsible rulers," but a public opinion in which the temper of responsible rulers is widely diffused. It is one of the solid virtues of democratic institutions that they give us this. But a responsible public opinion is an impossibility when the Press and public discussion are stifled as they are in Italy, and a state of terrorism is established such that, as a correspondent describes in a later article, no man will lightly venture an opinion on any public matter to a stranger. No regime under which men are afraid to speak their minds freely to one another can remain for long even efficient; nor can it ever be stable or secure. Nor again—and this is the point of most concern to the outside world—can it find it easy to live in peace with its neighbours. Mussolini's prestige depends on his appeal to the national pride; and Fascist Italy constitutes to-day one of the most serious perils to the peace of the world.

The supersession of democratic institutions not only in Italy but in several other countries undoubtedly has its lessons for us. We need to consider how far the successful working of parliamentary government in Britain in the last century was not due to conditions such as a strongly established two-party system, which have now disappeared or are endangered; and we need to be very careful indeed about adopting new electoral systems, such as Proportional Representation, which might make it more difficult to secure responsible, coherent government, with that reasonable degree of security of tenure which is essential to responsible coherent government. How parliamentary institutions will work in Great Britain under the new conditions created by the rise of the Labour Party, and the emergence of challenging social issues, is a question that has yet to be tested by experience. Yet, on the whole, we feel confident that they will emerge from the test more creditably than any of the dictatorships which have been established in Europe in recent years; and we see no reason to congratulate Italy on the possession of Mussolini or to withhold our respectful sympathy from those who have suffered exile, imprisonment, and outrage for refusing to "accept" his regime.

## LIBERALS ON DISARMAMENT

[We publish below a manifesto signed by Sir Charles Hobhouse, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, and Mr. Kingsley Griffith, on behalf of the National Liberal Federation, the Women's Liberal Federation, and the League of Young Liberals respectively.]

**T**HE failure of the recent conference at Geneva on Naval Disarmament, the lukewarmness of the British Government towards the Economic Convention, and the uncertainty of their attitude towards the negotiations for disarmament, together with the course of events at the recent meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations, make it essential that the policy of British Liberals, in relation to these matters of vital importance, should be made plain.

We hold that the complete suppression of war, as a means of settling disputes between nations, should be the dominant policy of every country. We consider that an immediate and stringent limitation and reduction of armaments is essential:—

Because the possession of great armaments has always been an incentive to war;

Because the Allies undertook in the Treaty of Versailles that German disarmament should be followed by a general measure of disarmament; and

Because a drastic reduction of military expenditure is the principal means by which the heavy burden of taxation, which presses upon our own and other peoples, can be lightened.

A whole-hearted support of the League of Nations is without doubt the best method by which Great Britain can help to achieve these ends. We regard the interests of the Dominions and India in these matters as identical with our own, and do not admit that any conflict can arise between the loyalty of Great Britain to our own Commonwealth and her loyalty to the League.

The immediate measures which, in our view, it is the duty of the British Government to take are these:—

1. To sign the undertaking, framed by the League of Nations, to refer all international disputes of a legal character to the League's Court of Justice at The Hague.
2. To enter into general or particular Treaties of Arbitration providing for the peaceful settlement of other disputes.
3. To reduce our own existing armaments, which are beyond the needs of the present situation, and specifically to repudiate any policy of entering into a competition in naval construction with the United States of America.
4. To press forward the action which is contemplated for codifying and defining more closely the principles of International Law.

We concur in the principles of the Locarno Treaty, and fully accept the special, and possibly onerous, obligations which it involves. If we cannot agree with those who wish to make such obligations general, and cannot favour any commitment to use the armed forces of this country in remote quarrels which the League might not be able to compose, we reaffirm our unqualified support of the provisions of the original Covenant of the League, in letter and in spirit. Powerful sanctions for the support of League decisions are there included, and although further definition may be possible and desirable in the main those sanctions should be effective for their purpose.

The increase of economic warfare which has been manifest in Europe since the Armistice is deeply injurious to the material well-being of all peoples, and is an increasingly dangerous obstacle to the spirit of goodwill and mutual forbearance on which the maintenance of peace must ultimately rest.

We earnestly support the unanimous resolution, passed by the representatives of forty-seven nations, including all the principal countries of the world, at the recent Economic

Conference at Geneva, "that the time has come to put an end to the increases in tariffs and to move in the opposite direction."

Finally, we express the hope that in the promotion of all these great objects our Government may show a zeal and activity which have of late been lacking. In our judgment the failure of Great Britain to retain the foremost place in the world movement towards a more rational and a more moral civilization is due in material part to the hesitating action and divided counsels of the Government. We do not desire to make the appeasement of the world a party issue, but death is no longer a fit penalty of international difference, nor desolation for international misunderstanding.

(Signed)

CHARLES HOBHOUSE, President of the National Liberal Federation.

MARGERY CORBETT ASHBY, President, Women's National Liberal Federation.

F. KINGSLEY GRIFFITH, President, National League of Young Liberals.

The whole country seems to be suffused with discontent on the one hand, and with unmistakable suppression on the other. The atmosphere has altered: it has become heavy and impregnated with suspicion. Freedom of speech and of thought are visibly suppressed: and one feels that one is back in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies of the days of King Bomba. The population seems to live in continual fear and apprehension. The particulars to be filled up on registering at a hotel are ridiculous in their minuteness, including in places even the positively insulting inquiry as to the identity of one's mother. It is dangerous to speak openly of certain men famous in the world of scholarship who are not in agreement with Fascist politics. If one happens to mention their names in the street in the course of ordinary conversation, without a thought of their political activities, one's companions look round uneasily and beg one to change the subject.

The public nervousness is increased by what amounts to an espionage system. It is dangerous in the extreme to discuss politics in public: the man with whom one has engaged in conversation, or the man at the next table, may be a zealous Fascist who will denounce one to the police, even if he is not a spy. The public guides are said to be strictly controlled, so that no foreigner may take away unfavourable impressions. The porters of apartment-houses are supposed to give information of any gathering which may take place, and are periodically questioned. The present writer has never come into contact with the secret police who interrogate suspects in the streets, but he knows persons who have. The whole spirit of the country has changed, not merely since pre-Fascist days, but since the early years of Fascist rule. Such a regime is surely a confession of weakness.

Though in public nervousness is rife, in private criticism has become outspoken. Four years ago, opinion amongst the middle classes was generally favourable to the Government. Now, from all quarters, one hears complaints and criticisms. It is not a mere question of "grousing," as it would be in England. It is an outspoken abhorrence, fear, and detestation which one hears expressed whenever there is security from eavesdropping. What the populace and the workers think, it is difficult for a stranger to judge. It was, however, the middle classes who formed the backbone of the Fascist might: and, if they are estranged, the days of Fascism itself are numbered.

One reason for this lies, of course, in the economic condition of the country. About a year ago, the lira stood at 150 to the pound: within a few months, it was forced up above 90. It was a magnificent piece of window-dressing, in spite of the fact that it was under Fascist rule that the currency had slumped. However, it was done so thoughtlessly that economic disaster threatened, and it was necessary to force it down again by several points. Fascist opinion, of course, had its explanation ready: that this was due to the machinations of the enemies of the country, who wished to embarrass the Government by precipitating their step in the right direction: and the proof of this lay in the fact that the greatest leap took place on the day when Torrigiani, the Masonic leader, was escorted to the frontier!

However that may be, the influence on the economic life of the country has been little short of disastrous. Statistics have, of course, been adduced to prove that the reverse is the case. But statistics are notoriously unreliable: and those in question have generally been taken from a period either before the great rise or before it had time to show its full effects. Materials were already in stock, orders were in hand, contracts remained to be worked off. When it is possible to take a period some six months later than the drastic change, it is likely that the figures will

## ITALY TO-DAY

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

THE English visitor who goes to Italy for a short holiday after a few years' absence returns overjoyed.

Much which used to be regarded as characteristic of the country has disappeared. The trains run to time. There is a showy, rather than successful, attempt to control the traffic. An enormous amount of building is going on. Public works of a nature to strike the imagination are being carried out on a scale impossible for a country which pays its debts. Window-dressing, in a word, is perfect: and the visitor returns and writes to the *Times* a letter in which Mussolini and all of his works are lauded to the seventh heaven.

On a fortnight's acquaintance with the fashionable hotels and professional guides, such an opinion is amply justified. It is here desired to present a view slightly more intimate. The present writer is no politician. His tendencies are certainly anti-Socialist: and he has voted consistently Conservative in recent elections. He happens, however, to know Italy intimately. He has been there repeatedly both before the Fascist Revolution and after. And he mixes in the country almost exclusively with native Italians of the middle classes. He ventures to imagine therefore that his impressions may be of slightly more value than those of the average tourist, even of one who has been admitted in audience by the Duce himself.

To be perfectly frank, his first visit after the Fascist revolution proved something of a disappointment. He went prepared to find almost a state of martial law, and a people on the verge of revolt. He found nothing of the sort. Those with whom he mixed were contented or apathetic: and Mussolini himself appeared to be immensely popular with all classes. True, too much seemed to depend upon one man: but that was a minor question. This was the state of affairs in 1923. Up to 1926, matters remained very much the same. The Black Shirts became a good deal less prominent as the Fascist system worked itself more and more into the national life. Otherwise, there was very little alteration to be seen.

During the space of rather less than one year, however, a greater change came about than in the course of the previous three. Window-dressing was still impressively carried out, though there seemed to be some tendency for the native unpunctuality to reassert itself on the railways. But, below the surface, everything was altered. In 1927, the writer found what he had expected in 1923.

be a little less roseate : and allowance must, moreover, be made for the great numbers working on short time or engaged by the Government on public works. Even now, there is a very definite shortage of money in the country. Every business man will tell you that he is in a difficult position : and persons like insurance brokers, who are in close touch with the lower (though not lowest) strata of the population, say that they have never known such hard times. An attempt has been made to make the cost of living keep pace with the level of the exchanges by ordering all prices to be reduced by 20 per cent. Considering that the exchange has gone up by over twice as much, this does not correspond by any means with "gold" prices. Moreover, as it is impossible to make sure what the prices were previously, and as it was always possible, even in the *prezzi fissi* shops, to obtain a liberal discount, this does not materially aid the ordinary customer. Italy is now one of the dearest countries in Europe. The thought of a Soho luncheon at half a crown would make the Florentine's mouth water. The present tourist season has been very bad, although the greatest rise took place after the Easter rush. The hotel keepers look forward with the utmost anxiety to next year.

On top of all of this, the personal popularity of Mussolini appears to be waning. The activities of the "Duce" still fill indeed a large proportion of the columns of the newspapers; but, since they are not allowed to publish criticisms, they are grateful for the copy. The magic of his name, however, seems to be disappearing, though his monumental features are stencilled on every wall : and he no longer enjoys the boundless personal prestige of a few years ago. Nevertheless, he is the only strong man in the country : and, though Fascism seems to be on the surface more securely entrenched than ever before, he is still absolutely necessary to it.

It is, perhaps, a truism that the tyrant who is losing prestige can avert his fall only by going to war. It is this which is at present the greatest menace to the peace of Europe. Italy is glaring over the frontier at France, which has now taken the place of Austria as the tyrant of *Italia Irredenta*—now the Haute Savoie, Nice, and Corsica. She has set covetous eyes upon Tunis. She views with apprehension the effect of the new French laws of nationality in assimilating the great masses of Italian settlers in that country and her colonies. A dozen pretexts of war exist, and are continually kept alive by the periodical frontier incidents. This is the great danger-spot of Western Europe : and the strength or the weakness of Fascism may make it burst almost any day into flame.

## PETROL PUMPS

THE more prominent London newspapers have recently directed their moral spot-light upon a subject which has spurred the club letter-writer to an even greater fluency than that which he is wont to display at the very height of his normal seasonal activity. I call this gentleman a club letter-writer with deference to tradition, but I have discovered that he composes his letters, not in the immediate vicinity of Down Street, but in one of the Turkish Baths which are not uncomfortably far away. Perhaps some man of science will study the possibilities of that peculiar quality of damp heat as a stimulus to one's latent ethical senses.

The victim is, of course, the Petrol Pump. The campaign began as the result of a little announcement, published in an obscure corner of the *Times*, which read as follows :—

"The Surbiton Urban District Council, at their monthly meeting, expressed the opinion that it was desirable that petrol pumps should be painted in less glaring

colours, and that, where groups of pumps were erected, they should be of the same colour. The Council have decided that applicants for permission to erect petrol pumps should be asked to comply with these views."

From the moment that this important announcement was made, the country, so it would appear from the Press, has risen not only in support of the comparatively mild attitude of the Surbiton District Council, but also in indignation against the very existence of these vermin which are destroying the virginity of our countryside.

Now that the problem of petrol pumps has ceased to be a mere economic one of Pumps *versus* Cans, and has risen to the status of becoming a problem of "rights" and "duties," it is perhaps time that the whole matter were considered on the same plane, but from a different angle.

Beauty, in the English landscape—as, I think, in nearly all landscapes—is, for nearly all of us, not solely to be sought from among those rare elements in the country which have managed to survive in their primæval form and which bear no traces of the hand of man. On the contrary, it is inseparably identified in our minds with that indefinable "character" of the English countryside, which in itself is based on the entirely arbitrary juxtaposition and superimposition of objects, some of which are purely natural growths, some purely artificial "importations," most of them objects which bear the stamp both of nature and of man. The village inn, the country lane, and the windmill have been so entirely assimilated by convention into the English countryside that they are now considered as being almost the exclusive property of the nature-lover. Without them, and without many other marks of the inroads which man has made into the country, the English landscape would not only lose some of its most precious characteristics, but it would also become, even to the nature-lover, who is not so unsophisticated a person as he himself suspects, a very dull affair.

This character of the country, then, is based on an arbitrary order of things; it is more subtle and more varied than the work of one hand (certainly more subtle than the work of a District Council); but its subtlety lies also in the fact that it is for ever changing and developing. And because it is not static, it is anathema to static minds. One continually meets people who seem to be in a perpetual state of sulks about the effect of this particular age on the beauty of the countryside. Other ages have apparently been privileged to depredate the highways with vulgar village signs and even the fields with ploughs, but for some reason these particular artifices for attracting the eye of the passer-by or for turning the land into a sounder financial investment which are characteristic of the present age are invariably to be condemned. These people, in their attitude towards the country, remind one of that section of the public who, in Jean Cocteau's "Cock and Harlequin" :—

"have not yet learned that art is continuous and believed that art stopped yesterday in order to go on, perhaps, to-morrow."

Art, let us hope, is indeed continuous, but it will only be continuous so long as the artist has a sense of the reality of his own age; and for this reason, many artists tend instinctively to seek subject-matter which suggests to them in some way their own age. I deliberately avoid a more sweeping generalization, because some artists are much more sensitive to the positive nature of their subject-matter than others. There is, of course, no fear of art declining for lack of subject-matter, but the point to be emphasized is that the real observer of beauty does not necessarily squirm at every sign of development in the character of the countryside. He feels only pity for those whose vision has got "stuck," who are trying to see through disused spectacles, and hence remain in a permanent state of being shocked and of asking themselves, somewhat insecurely, where all this is going to lead to. It is also a fact that these people have never been of much service either to their contemporaries or to their successors.

This is not to advocate the complete absorption of the country by the towns. Living in an over-industrialized country, we have every reason to protect ourselves from being deafened by noise and from losing the last vestiges of freedom and privacy. Urban District Councils have

every right and duty to protect our country from further encroachment on such grounds as those of public health or public morality. In this field one often feels that they might have done more, had they been less tempted by some industrialist with an attractive scheme for polluting the air for the public benefit. Again, sections of the country which have been the material for some deliberately created work of art may certainly deserve the protection of our district councils. Our finest parks have often been conceived and laid out as a whole, the introduction of a petrol pump in the middle of which might be in strong opposition to the original artist's intention. Only administrative authorities and wealthy public benefactors can save these gems from the claws of the more unscrupulous business man.

But what we mean by "country" is something in quite a different category. No one has put it in order, no one has protected it, no one has compiled rules as to what it shall look like; it is hence a complete escape from the theories and the fashions of art. But we are in danger of losing even this. I really do not see why an Urban District Council has the right to lay down the law as regards the beauty of the countryside. Beauty is much too intangible a thing to be treated in this way; and I foresee the cosmopolitan art-student of the future saying: "The English landscape is cast in the 1927 Urban District Council style which is now so *passé*; you should come and see the 1940 Arrondissement Artistic Adviser's Cézannist treatment of the Pont du Gard district." For our local authorities will soon get tired of "protecting" the country; they will find it much more diverting to arrange it to harmonize with the vision, as they conceive it, of some old master whom they happen at the moment to be venerating.

And after all, is the petrol pump such an unsightly fellow? Much depends, of course, on the accident of his surroundings. But I would venture to suggest that he may, just occasionally, be useful to the artist as providing a point of focus to which the eye may be directed, and in relation to which a composition may take shape. In a similar way, trees, roads, and coastlines are instinctively sought out by the artist as something "for the eye to get hold of," before the less strongly defined objects in the artist's vision take on a definite meaning.

At any rate, we can console ourselves. The country is too formidable a toy to be mauled about by our public bodies, and it is not likely that the effects of their improving hand will be conspicuous. So I felt, until the club-writer's campaign caused me to be uneasy for the first time that the petrol pumps were really in danger. After all, some of us have quite a genuine, even a romantic affection for them.

W. H. MONTAGU-POLLOCK.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

A NEW campaign is beginning for industrial peace. The employers have, of course, every reason to wish the continuance of the respite from strikes which the weakening of trades unionism has given them. Labour knows well enough that the strike is a weapon that cripples the hand that wields it. Both parties want peace—provided the terms are good enough. The speeches at the Mansion House the other day showed clearly that the workers are suspicious of an attempt to stabilize peace on a basis of lowered wages—"they make a desolation and call it peace." Mr. Tom Shaw invited the employers to say to the workers, "If you give us the best possible production we will guarantee you against any cutting down of wages." Sir Alfred Mond, for whose statesmanship in the industrial field I have the highest admiration, was perfectly ready to accept this formula. He is out for the scientific organization of industry with arbitration machinery—the much wanted "League of the Two Nations"—high wages and the common interest in prosperity, on the American and, to a lesser degree, the German plan. I confess I am wary of premature enthusiasm over

these peace conferences of Labour and Capital with their vague optimism. I have a vivid memory of the great effort which the Coalition Government made at the end of the War to establish peace and co-operation in industry, at a time when almost anything could have been done with goodwill all round. That effort petered out in the most miserable manner. And I must add that I should feel more hopeful about the prospects of this campaign if I did not know a little of the spirit of bitterness in the coal fields—to take one stricken battlefield alone. Goodwill must begin at the coal face (for example), not in the Mansion House. The workers will know quickly enough when it exists without platform eloquence to enlighten them—and the employers also.

\* \* \*

I do not take the humorous view of Mr. Shaw's defence of Mussolini and Fascism (albeit a qualified defence) that most commentators have taken. I think that it will have a disastrous effect upon his reputation among Liberals all over the world. The Italian Press has, of course, greedily seized upon it, while suppressing the other half of the correspondence. He has called down upon himself a scathing rebuke from Professor Salvemini, who has surely sounder reasons to know what Fascism is than Mr. Shaw. Even as a piece of argumentation Mr. Shaw's letter was singularly confused and contradictory for such a master of advocacy. He is usually right, however perverse he may be in details of argument and illustration. This time he is wrong, and must know he is wrong, and this cramps his style. To find Mr. Shaw pleading for a tyranny is to me so astonishing and disturbing that I prefer to hold that having in the first place blundered into ill-considered praise of Mussolini he was too combative to withdraw. Unfortunately what Mr. Shaw says does matter, and the damage done by this intellectual pugilism to the cause of liberty will be incalculable.

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The High Church Canon and his friends who created a disturbance in St. Paul's last Sunday were inconsistent as well as silly. When the late Mr. Kensit and his supporters used to commit this kind of offence, in protest against the "ritualism," the sufferers were full of pious horror. No words were too strong to denounce the sacrilege of the brawlers. Yet Canon Bullock-Webster, who happens to dislike the Bishop of Birmingham's views on transubstantiation, can find no more reasonable way of relieving himself than to copy the Kensitites, and make a row in church. If the disturbers had kept quiet and listened to the sermon they would have heard a very able effort to reconcile religion and evolution—a line of argument which I do not find convincing myself, but which certainly is of the utmost value to a Church that is struggling to hold its own in the world of modern thought. Canon Bullock-Webster ought in mere gratitude to have allowed his intervention to take the form of a vote of thanks. Instead of that he bit the hand that was trying to feed him. In any case the time has gone by for this nonsense of heresy hunting. Such demonstrations cause nothing but contemptuous indifference. The Bishop is surely on the safest ground that religion can discover in a period of intellectual earthquake. When he accepts evolution and declares that it is "simply God's method of creation," no scientist can have a word to say.

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I had a little talk the other day with an old missionary from the Solomon Islands which left me with something to turn over in the mind. "We used to get on very well before Government came," was one casual but startling remark he made. By "we," he meant the missionaries, and the people they got on so well with were the fierce and wild natives of Malaita, who recently killed the British administrator and his party. The old missionary was not a

Tolstoyan anarchist or any kind of enemy of Government. Twenty or thirty years ago, when Government as yet left the island very much to itself—when there were no taxes—the natives had no grievances against the white man sufficient to stir them to a pathetic futility of revolt. Then came "progress," which, from the native point of view, meant two linked things—taxes and labour on the white man's plantations. No doubt Government is only taxing these wild men, who were head-hunters and cannibals yesterday, for their good. The natives (according to my friend) do not look at it in that light at all. They have not the least notion why a head tax of ten shillings is exacted, but they know in practice that what it means is that their sons or brothers or fathers have got to work on the white man's plantations to raise the money. To this they violently object, just as you or I would object if some mysterious, implacable authority were to come along and force us out of our familiar groove of life, with all its ancient and comfortable setting of custom and tradition, into some new, unfamiliar, and hated life, involving hard labour for the profit of foreigners.

\* \* \*

The dreadful thing that has happened to the *DAILY MAIL* is enough to make poor Lord Northcliffe turn in his grave. Recently, you must know, the *DAILY MAIL*, turning from Russian oil and the woes of Hungary, asked in momentous headlines, "Are We Less Religious?" For a reply the *DAILY MAIL* naturally turned to those most qualified to supply important answers. It wrote to the whole bench of Bishops, beginning with the Archbishops, with the noble offer to give free space for articles written by them. The result is almost incredible. The Archbishops and Bishops, with only two exceptions, wrote to say that they were too busy. (Too busy! Is Dean Inge too busy? Of course, "free space" is not quite sufficient for him.) Well may the *DAILY MAIL* express its pained surprise at the neglect of this wonderful offer (with portrait of the Archbishop of Canterbury). Still, the painful affair has at least done a little to enlighten the *DAILY MAIL* on the subject of the inquiry. We are less religious, it is to be feared because our religious leaders "do not use the opportunities they are offered of placing their views before the largest possible audience." A publicity expert writes indignantly to support this view. It is no use offering these supine Bishops "Space which no money could buy." They are too busy, presumably with their own inferior methods of teaching religion. So the paper is constrained to quote Bishops at second-hand. One Bishop thinks that "the idea of God cuts no ice in these days," and the *DAILY MAIL* itself mounts the pulpit of its leader and "mourns that children no longer say their prayers." What indeed are we coming to!

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I looked into the National Gallery to see the Lichnowsky Tintoretto, on view there in the long Venetian room before it goes to Australia. As a good citizen of the British Empire, it pleases me that Australia and not America has secured one of the diminishing number of fine Italian masters that are not in Italy or in the public collections. I should have been still more pleased if we could have kept it in London as a companion picture to the other great Tintoretto portrait, the "Morosini." This Melbourne portrait, the "Doge Pietro Loredano," is a marvellous study of foxy wisdom. The old politician has a disarming expression of reasonableness on his worn face, with its dark cunning eyes and bottle-nose. Someone at the Council meeting has just asked an embarrassing question, and the Doge with extended propitiatory hand has clearly fenced with it. His mouth has closed on a Front Bench reply.

As a mere walker, I felt safe for once among the glittering, swaggering avenues of motor-cars at Olympia. There was only the danger of being trampled under the feet of the crowd. Still, it was depressing to speculate on the future, when these and many thousand more cars have been released into the gorged roads to make life more than ever a perilous enterprise for the poor and old-fashioned. Following a natural impulse of reaction I set out next day into the country determined to confirm for myself the cheering knowledge that the victory of the car is even now incomplete. I found this delightfully easy. Without going more than twenty-five miles from Charing Cross I tramped a circuit of twelve or fourteen miles (it was Saturday afternoon) without seeing more than half a dozen motors. The plan was to ask the local people for the footpath from village to village. There always is one. It worked wonderfully well, and all that long day I was alone, except for talks with lonely men thrashing walnuts out of trees or following the plough. The woods of Buckinghamshire are friendly places and rarely, if ever, guard their exquisite peace with gates and barbed wire. The best moment of the day was spent on a stile on a hill, whence there was not one chimney to break the primeval solitude of the wide expanse of meadow and burning autumnal wood. It was so quiet that a mole came out into the open and seeing me vanished as quickly as the pedestrian eludes the conquering car in the street.

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The following anecdote of Foch, which I have on high authority (as the papers say), may have been published before. I should think Sir Henry Wilson would not neglect it in his diary, but I have been too busy to search. As we all know, the gay optimism of Foch was of the utmost value in the councils of the Allies. He met disasters with a sturdy cheerfulness which again and again put heart into his colleagues. In one of the blackest hours of the war, it was early in 1918, I think, the war leaders meeting in Paris were struggling against depression which no one would confess. Suddenly Foch left the room and was seen sitting in the corridor at a little distance, apparently with his head buried in his hands. The effect was overwhelming. Everyone stared at him in silence for some moments. Then Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Henry Wilson got up and went towards him, I suppose with the idea of comforting him. When they came near they found that Foch was not despairing. He was blowing vigorously into the stem of a pipe which an English admirer had given him. It would not draw, and he was angry with it.

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE HOUSING PROBLEM

SIR.—Round figures are so dangerous that I am moved to protest against the Hymn of the Millionth House. It is a perfectly good hymn as hymns go, but like much else in the Hymnary it means nothing. The millionth post-war house has no more intrinsic significance than the millionth post-war egg or the millionth post-war motor-car. A specious importance is, however, lent to it by the assumption that the natural need of our nation is 100,000 houses a year, another dangerous round figure, itself rendered specious by a recent calculation that 70,000 of the 100,000 are for new need, and 30,000 for the replacement of worn-out houses.

It would take more than a letter to do justice to the very interesting question of what really constitutes housing need. But the origin of this 100,000 figure should at least be understood. It derives from the returns made by the Inland Revenue before the war showing the annual increase in

houses. The average annual increase in the years 1904-13 was 86,500, but as there were no figures available of the number of houses demolished year by year before the war, there is, in fact, no figure of the number of houses built. It is only in the last few years that figures of new construction have been collected by the Ministry of Health.

In any case, the figure 100,000 has little or no relevance to present conditions. The pre-war increase in houses represented roughly the effective demand. The "real need" (the phrase must be coined to express the houses required to enable every family to have a house to itself) was, of course, much greater. The position at the end of the War was that the real need was swollen by the cessation of house building for four years, and that the gap between real need and effective demand was widened by the disproportionate increase in the cost of building.

Effective demand is a resultant of several forces: one is the cost of building; another is the excess of families in different wage-groups over the houses of corresponding rent-groups locally available; another is rent-paying ability, which must be taken as being governed not only by wages but by willingness to allocate such and such a percentage of income for rent. What has happened since 1919 is that:—

- (1) State assistance has turned part of the real need into effective demand by putting houses at uneconomic rents within reach of a certain number of families which could not afford the full rent of new houses; part of the subsidy has in fact gone to supplement rent-paying ability.
- (2) Building by Local Authorities has provided a partial substitute for the financial organization which was the basis of speculative building of houses which were sold to be let before the War.
- (3) The number of people willing to buy houses for their own occupancy has been increased, especially in the South of England, partly by lump sum grants, partly by the enterprising policy of Building Societies and Insurance Companies.

In short, State assistance has, both directly and indirectly, turned potential demand into effective demand. At the same time it has undoubtedly raised the cost of building: only part of the subsidy has reached the householder.

Now, sir, no one can say what the demand would have been if post-war wages had been in the same proportion to the cost of building as before the War. A higher standard of what a home should be strengthens the will to pay a fair rent. That the standard has been raised no one who has friends living in slums or semi-slums will deny. The average working boy to-day values a bath at least as highly as did the aristocratic grandfathers of readers of *THE NATION*, and uses it, if he has a chance, more often. Parents, themselves educated, see that their better educated children need healthy and decent sleeping quarters. The raising of the standard has by itself increased the potential demand, and even if 100,000 houses per year had been sufficient to meet the growing needs of 7,943,137 families in 1911, the same number would not necessarily suffice for 8,739,197 families in 1921, or for 8,739,197 plus  $x$  families in 1927. In many areas the market for owning-occupiers is now overstocked: in most areas something substantial has been done to make effective the potential demand for ten, twelve, or fifteen shillings a week houses. But slum replacement is generally held up; and large numbers of what were single-family houses before the War are being hastened towards slumdom by being turned into multi-family houses without structural adaptation.

That brings the argument to Mr. Simon's conundrum. If his sample is fairly representative; if, that is, the building of a million post-war houses has done nothing to dispel over-crowding in pre-war houses, the deduction must be that the million houses have not more than sufficed to meet that part of the increase in the real need which is translatable by State assistance, and otherwise into effective demand. If only all conclusions in the housing argument were so irresistible! Mr. Simon puts his finger unerringly on the first snag in the next stage when he points out that the larger the family the larger the accommodation needed and the smaller the rent-paying ability. I would add two suggestions for consideration: the first, that social insurance might be extended to cover the extra liability for rent which falls on

a working-class family while the children are at school; the second, that the principle practised by the admirable Peabody Trust of building for tenants of a certain income limit should be extended to houses owned by Local Authorities. Objections to either of these schemes are obvious. But the objections to leaving things as they are are immeasurably more serious.

But the approach to the slum problem must be clear-eyed. The difference between it and the provision for "new families" is one of kind, not degree. It is a question not of turning post-war potential demand into effective demand, but of doing what has never been done before, namely, of meeting the real housing need. Some slum-dwellers cannot on the evidence of any table of Protein and Carbohydrates afford to pay rent at all. In some the will to payment is lacking. Many, most indeed, cannot afford the rent of a self-contained house, however small. The seriousness of the present position is that arrears of slum clearance have accumulated just when the natural increase of slums (the natural increase of slums is governed mainly by the increase in small house-building seventy-five to one hundred years ago) is at its maximum.

The Report of the Royal Commission of 1884 is a classic, in many ways it is the best work of dialogue in the English language. It put together for the first time a mass of facts drawn from parsons in poor parishes, social workers, doctors, builders, and others with first-hand knowledge. But the position with regard to evidence is now changed. The annual reports of Medical Officers of Health, Surveys made by official and unofficial bodies, and other documents contain data which until recently were unobtainable. If there is to be a new Royal Commission to find a remedy for slums, it must aim from the start at meeting a need which has not reached the stage even of being potential demand, that is to say, a need which has been created largely by the fact that too many of the schools in which voters of to-day had been educated have been set, and are still set, in seas of squalor. Unless it has this end in view, its report cannot be much more than a mere review of the effect of the housing policies instituted since the War.—Yours, &c., W. McG. EAGAR.

29, Trinity Square, Southwark, S.E.1.  
October 14th, 1927.

### THE WEIR HOUSE

SIR,—In view of the article under the above heading which appeared in your issue of the 8th instant, we trust you will be good enough to give space for a short reply.

Your contributor states that houses have been built largely at the taxpayers' expense. As the Weir house has always compared favourably in cost with other types, it has certainly not been erected at the taxpayers' expense any more than any other type of house. It is unfortunate that the taxpayer has to contribute to some extent to the cost of the supply of working-class houses, but this is not peculiar to any make.

It is also stated that there is no sarking on the roof of a Weir bungalow. Weir bungalows have never been built without sarking. The roofs of the flatted type of house, however, have been formed of Courtrai du Nord tiles and laid in accordance with the instructions given by the suppliers which, except in very exposed positions, do not call for the use of sarking. The roof is a feature which is not peculiar to any particular type of house.

Again, the house has never been claimed by Lord Weir to be a "steel house." The name was given to it by the public, but it has always been a composition structure.

The trouble with falling chimneys occurred in one of the most severe gales ever experienced. Many of the chimneys were not properly set, and none of them were fitted with the stay ladders, which were delivered late owing to difficulties in obtaining material consequent on the coal strike. The chimneys were re-erected and the ladders fitted without expense to the owners, and, apart from this, the houses were singularly free from the troubles in the roofs of many other types caused by the storm.

We do not consider it is necessary to reply in detail to other criticisms offered by your contributor. Failure of hot-water systems, defective doors, and even fires, occur in all

types of houses and are not a necessary adjunct or peculiar in any way to the Weir form of construction.

In cases where these troubles have been due to any cause for which this Company is responsible, they have been, and will be, put right by us.

In view of the unbiased attitude claimed by your contributor, it is curious that he refers particularly to Weir houses which were vacant at Dundee. In that city there is a large scheme involving Weir and other types of steel houses. Three weeks ago we took the trouble to make inquiries in Dundee, and found that all the Weir houses were let, four were unoccupied but the tenants were to move in very shortly. Some other steel houses had twenty-nine unoccupied for reasons with which we are not conversant. The figures should speak for themselves.

The Weir house is not claimed as a perfect dwelling, entirely free from the defects and troubles which occasionally arise in all types of houses. It had certain obvious defects in detail in the earlier stages, which have been rectified later, and continual watch is being kept on all the details of construction so that if improvements can be made from time to time the alterations are effected as quickly as possible.

What has been proved is that in the large number of houses erected and occupied, the majority have thoroughly satisfied tenants, that the house is cheaper than that of similar accommodation in brick or stone at the present time, and that the speed of erection is greater than any other recognized method.

If and when the capacity of the regular building trade is large enough to deal with the appalling shortage of houses in Scotland, it is possible that the Weir house will cease to be built, having then served its purpose. In the meantime, it is making a very considerable contribution to the shortage, and we do not think it will be seriously affected by criticism such as that of your contributor.—Yours, &c.,

J. D. STEVEN,  
General Manager.

Cardonald Housing Corporation Ltd.,  
Barfillan Drive, Cardonald, Glasgow.  
October 14th, 1927.

#### "THE BLANESBURGH FIASCO"

SIR.—The contributor of your article of October 8th on the Unemployment Insurance Bill refers, in the last paragraph on page 12, to "the present rules forbidding claimants to benefit to seek work outside the industry or trade in which they are insured."

This must surely be a misprint, as the writer of the article, who otherwise is evidently very well informed, must be aware that no such rule exists, although it is not at present possible to insist that a claimant to benefit *shall* seek work of a nature different from that to which he has been accustomed. This, you will agree, is a very different thing from "forbidding" a man to leave his own and find work in another industry, a process which probably all but the most hidebound Trade Unionists will agree to be very necessary in the rapidly changing conditions of the present day.—Yours, &c.,

G. CHELIOTI.

53, Rusthall Mansions, Bedford Park, W.4.  
October 11th, 1927.

[We are obliged to our correspondent for calling attention to this passage, which, we agree, gave a misleading impression. It should read: "A modification of the present rules which *tend to discourage* claimants to benefit from seeking work outside the industry or trade in which they are insured." The present position seems to be that as far as claimants to standard benefit are concerned, the rules in force operate as an effective bar to transference from one employment to another. As regards claimants to extended benefit, the Minister has a discretionary power, which has facilitated some transference from employment to employment, though in the last resort the decision as to whether the employment offered is suitable rests with the Umpire. The present Bill in abolishing extended benefit will abolish with it the Minister's discretionary power; hence the proposed new clause, which will apply to all claimants for benefit. This clause provides that "after the lapse of such an interval from the date on which an insured contributor

becomes unemployed as, in the circumstances of the case, is reasonable, *employment shall not be deemed to be unsuitable by reason only that it is employment of a kind other than employment in the usual occupation of the insured contributor*, if it is employment at a rate of wage not lower, and on conditions not less favourable, than those generally observed by agreement between associations of employers and of employees, or, failing any such agreement, than those generally recognized by good employers."—ED., NATION.]

#### THE ROUMANO-HUNGARIAN DISPUTE

SIR.—May I be permitted, as one of your regular readers, to thank you for publishing such an exceptionally intelligible and fair statement of the Roumanian-Hungarian dispute at Geneva? It is rare to find a case so complicated and so replete with national bias presented so dispassionately and so objectively. As one of many to whom the case has long been a study and a problem I am grateful to Mr. Wilson Harris.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM GOODE.

49, Westbourne Gardens, W.2.

October 15th, 1927.

#### THE SURTAX MYSTERY

SIR.—Some light has, I think, at last been thrown on the vexed question, discussed in your issues of September 24th and October 15th, as to whether the Labour Party intend to include undistributed profits which Companies put to reserve in their estimate of the yield of their proposed surtax, by the speech of Mr. H. N. Brailsford at the Family Allowances Conference at the London School of Economics on Saturday.

Mr. Brailsford spoke on "The State and Family Allowances," and contended that, whereas the methods of paying these allowances by means of contributory insurance or industrial pools would prove a direct burden on industry since so much of the cost would come out of the industry as an addition to wages, by the State scheme the industry would not be directly affected as "income and super tax are not a direct charge on industry as rates and insurance contributions, &c., are. They fall not on the company but on the private purse of the shareholders and directors of the company."

Mr. Brailsford went on to say that the Labour Party proposal was that Family Allowances should be paid out of the proposed surtax, and this would be part of a man's "expenses not as a manufacturer but as a householder."

Mr. Brailsford was very insistent that the cost of the allowances should come out of the pocket of the individual and not of the company, and since the expenses of the allowances are to be met by the Surtax, this seems to prove that undistributed profits of companies are not included.—Yours, &c.,

F. L. JOSEPHY.

26, Frog Lane, Hampstead, N.W.3.  
October 17th, 1927.

#### THE SURREY COMMONS

SIR.—In commenting upon the deputation to the War Office you note the suggestion made by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher that the Surrey Commons should be acquired by the Government and vested in the National Trust. It is an interesting suggestion but, as we all recognize, impracticable. There is more immediate value in the appeal for a Royal Commission to investigate the peril to our open spaces, but the danger is so urgent that positive protective action should come even before a national inquiry.

Two months ago I urged that the whole matter should be raised to its rightful level of importance by the creation of a National Parks Division of a public Department. In no other way, I submit, can the nation's heritage be safeguarded. It should be given a standing of its own in the Government, where at present there cannot be any effective check upon the War Office or the Admiralty whenever fresh territory is demanded by either. Obviously there is not, as things stand, any Cabinet Minister in a position to challenge the fighting Services on a question of this kind. As Sir Laming Worthington-Evans plainly indicated last week, his Department can proceed unhampered.—Yours, &c.,

Pound Hill, Sussex.

S. K. RATCLIFFE.

## JOSEPH LANCASTER

"Back they came galloping through the Strand,  
When Joseph Lancaster, stick in hand,  
Popp'd up his head before 'em."  
"The Truants" (Ingoldsby Legends).

**O**N October 22nd, 1838, eighty-nine years ago to-day, a poor man, approaching his sixtieth year and contemplating in the near future a return to his native land after an absence of twenty years, was run over in a street in New York by a frightened horse. He died the next day. So ended the mortal career of the incalculable Joseph Lancaster, whose activities in England during the first decade of the nineteenth century precipitated the laying of foundations upon which the elementary education system of this country is based.

Joseph Lancaster was born in London of humble dissenting parents in 1778. His first recorded adventure was at fourteen years of age, when inspired by Clarkson's *Essay on the Slave Trade*, and armed with a Bible and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," he set off by road to Bristol with the intention of picking up a passage to Jamaica where he proposed to teach the blacks. He was returned to his father, and some four or five years later he is on the way to becoming a Quaker and has opened in Southwark a school for poor children on an unsectarian basis which developed into the famous Borough Road School.

In 1801, when Lancaster was about twenty-two years of age and still comparatively unknown, the yet more youthful Elizabeth Fry recorded in her Diary, "We went in the evening to see a friend (Joseph Lancaster) who kept a school for poor children. I felt a wish that the young man might be preserved in humility." Sixteen years later the Duke of Sussex, writing to William Allen, the Quaker philanthropist, says, "As for Joseph Lancaster, I will not begin the year by abusing him . . . great as his sins have been, and ever must be acknowledged, the smiles of flattery were too bewitching for him, and he has unfortunately become a slave at the shrine of that seducer." Eloquent testimony to the discernment of the sainted Elizabeth!

There was indeed provision of a sort for the education of the children of the working classes before Joseph Lancaster and his associates came on the scene. For those who could and would pay a few pence there were dames' schools, for some others there were charity schools and schools of industry, and since 1870, when Robert Raikes, the Gloucester printer, founded his school, there had been an immense development of Sunday Schools in which the teaching was by no means confined to religious instruction. But there was no systematic attempt to provide "Schools for all."

The "Royal Free School" in the Borough Road soon attracted the notice of a number of distinguished people ranging from the royal dukes to Francis Place; and it was visited by scores of travellers, including foreign princes and ambassadors, from all parts of Europe. Its growing size forced Lancaster to develop a system of the older teaching the younger children, which became known as the "Monitorial System." In 1805 Lancaster had an audience of King George III., which concluded by His Majesty saying, "Lancaster, I will subscribe £100 annually. You shall subscribe £50, Charlotte; and the Princesses £25 each." Royal favour had its disadvantages; it hastened the onslaught of those who feared unsectarian religious instruction, and, in addition, it helped to turn Lancaster's head. His passionate zeal for education sent him travelling through England to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, establishing schools as he went and leaving a trail of debts behind him. Recklessness was accompanied by ostentation. Francis Place says, "He seldom went from home but in a carriage,

and generally had some of his lads in one or two postchaises following him." He drove up to the house of Robert Owen, whose first public appearance was made at a dinner in Lancaster's honour, in a four-horse postchaise, and, with some justification, Mrs. Owen doubted the wisdom of the gift of £1,000 which her husband made to further Lancaster's schemes. He quarrelled with and publicly abused the faithful friends—"good William Allen" amongst them—who, whilst attempting to restrain his extravagance, were making superhuman efforts to spread his system of education, and were willing, withal, to give the author credit for everything that was accomplished. But Joseph Lancaster's behaviour was more than flesh and blood even of saints and Quakers could stand, and eventually the Royal Lancasterian Association of 1808 emerged in 1814 as the British and Foreign School Society. In 1818 Lancaster, bankrupt and disappointed, shipped to America on the bounty of the friends he had traduced, and there, after characteristic wanderings and his usual quota of friction, he died in 1838, having been for some time, as an old pupil who was with him at the time recorded, "ripening for heaven."

If Lancaster was his own worst enemy, his next most formidable opponent was Sarah Trimmer, that redoubtable champion of the Established Church who, in addition to being a prolific writer, organized the education not only of her own twelve children, but also of innumerable other children in Brentford, where her Sunday Schools achieved considerable fame. She quickly scented in Lancaster's unsectarian scheme a grave danger to the Church, if not to the Throne and Constitution. In a pamphlet published in 1805 she examines his work at Borough Road, gives him credit for its marvels of organization, criticizes his method of rewards and punishments, and warns the Church of the danger of allowing the experiment to develop into a national system. Her greatest achievement, however, was to rouse Andrew Bell from his comfortable retirement in a Swanage rectory and propel him into the arena as the champion of national education on Church lines.

Dr. Andrew Bell, the industrious son of poor Scotch parents, and a good churchman, was employing monitors in a school in Madras when Lancaster was trudging to Bristol, and moreover he had recorded his experiment in a pamphlet. All this fuss about Lancaster being the inventor of the new method was thus unwarranted. Dr. Bell, Mrs. Trimmer urged, should bring his "own plan still forwarder to public observation as the original one." Dr. Bell reluctantly agreed. Thereafter the battle was joined. In sermons and pamphlets, in the *EDINBURGH* and *QUARTERLY REVIEWS*, the protagonists waged furious warfare, the echoes of which were frequently to be heard in the House of Commons.

Dignified controversy developed into abuse. Lancaster was the "Goliath of Schismatics." Southey said, "The good which he has done is very great, but it is pretty much in the way that the Devil has been the cause of redemption." But the hard hitting was not all on one side. The *EDINBURGH REVIEW* referred to Mrs. Trimmer as "the voluminous female," and Sydney Smith described her in that journal as "a lady of respectable opinions, and very ordinary talents, defending what is right without judgment, and believing what is holy without charity."

In the result there was founded in 1811 The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. These two societies, the "British" and the "National," strove for twenty years, almost singlehanded and depending entirely upon voluntary contributions, to meet the educational needs of the masses. It was not until 1833 that Government aid

came in the form of a grant of £20,000, which was, in effect, divided between the two Societies.

Narrow the conception of education may have been, particularly if the following arithmetic problem is typical of the scope of instruction in those days, "The children of Israel were sadly given to idolatry, notwithstanding all they knew of God. Moses had to put three thousand men to death for this grievous sin. How would you express this number in digits?" But even though it be profitless to study the educational methods of a hundred years ago and undesirable to lay bare the religious controversies of those times, the philanthropic zeal of the early nineteenth century deserves recall and merits emulation.

J. P.

## CONGRATULATIONS

I CAN imagine that a man might make a very pretty position for himself in the world by devoting a few hours a day to the writing of letters of congratulation. If he were to set out with a definite plan and follow it scrupulously he would soon find himself free of any society he desired. He might sup with *étoiles*, dine with princes, and breakfast with best-selling novelists. He would quickly find himself a popular person whose praise would be sought eagerly by people of ten times his ability. He would live sumptuously and die regretted through no less simple a pursuit than the judicious sale of incense.

I have done a little in this way myself, but have never developed it to the pitch at which I am now visualizing it, yet I believe I have learnt the rules of the game to some purpose. Unlike any other form of letter from the unknown to the great, the letter of congratulation is never an impertinence. It does not matter in the least to what height of power, success, or reputation its recipient may have climbed, it is still a welcome letter. The pearl-strung *prima donna*, the war lord harnessed to his own medals, the merchant prince directing his vast argosies—all of them are game for the artless praise of John Smith of Surbiton. A simple phrase is only needed: "You sang like a nightingale"; "Would to God, my lord, I had had the honour to serve under you during your last campaign against the Chiks"; "Your imported collar studs, my dear sir, are unbreakable and unbeatable." Not one of them but would feel warmly towards Smith and thank God that Surbiton sheltered so sprightly and discerning an intelligence.

For myself, I was quite ingenuous when I tumbled to this knowledge. On two occasions in my younger life I was so deeply moved that I was impelled to write letters which by any standard of manners would have been impertinent, to two people of distinction I knew not from Adam. The first was an actress of great beauty whose performance had thrilled me beyond measure. It so happened that the more hardly veined critics had been cool to her efforts, so my letter to her arrived opportunely enough. Later we became acquainted, and I am now pledged to a lifetime of dissimulation (knowing less of the technique of acting than the mechanics of flying), for she insists on my "opinion" on her every appearance. I am told that I at least can dissociate her art from her fatal beauty, and, dissembling hound that I am, I admit this absurdity.

This lovely creature was the first to stir the irresistible impulse. The second was a Battalion of the Royal Marines marching in the funeral procession of an Admiral. I was in the crowd that lined Whitehall, and having some military training, flattered myself that I knew a thing or two about marching. But here was superb marching. Slow marching, which can be so ridiculous, made by perfect drill and

discipline into a thing of beauty. I knew nothing and cared nothing about the old relic in the coffin, but I was extraordinarily stirred by this wonderful exhibition of disciplined grief. It was no doubt entirely unreal, but that did not detract one whit from its poignancy.

I rushed to paper about it. I inquired who commanded the Marines. I was told that there was an Adjutant-General who lived at the Admiralty. I determined to write to him. I did so in hyperbole. I forgot what I said. I think I compared his troops to the Russian ballet and the Palace Girls. I posted the letter and instantly felt faintly sick. The old warrior would not understand. He would laugh at me. He might even know my name and tell the story at his Club, read my ingenuous letter to the battle-scarred cynics at his luncheon table. But I need have had no fear. By return of post I had his acknowledgment. It ran: "My dear sir—I am so glad you liked my jolly old Marines. They are fine fellows, aren't they?"

It seems to me now axiomatic that that kind of letter never goes amiss. There may be some flattered favourites whose post-bag is so full of adulation that it has become a bore to them—but they are very few. I have seen a great newspaper proprietor purring with satisfaction over the letter of "A Constant Reader from Bootle" in whose opinion his journal was still "the best and brightest." I have seen such letters passed round newspaper offices and finally printed in large type amongst the leading articles. I have known novelists with hundred thousand circulations who have treasured in their note-cases (and even inflicted on their friends) the whinnyings of unknown old ladies over their immortal works. I have even myself received one or two such letters and know what sweet balm to the soul they are.

To be perfect they should, of course, be spontaneous—they should be the natural expression of an admiration that cannot be contained, unstudied and artless in style. The perfect writer of letters of congratulation must be simple enough to feel his enthusiasms, for the vainest of us are not long deceived by mere flattery. But if he or she put no inhibition on themselves they may be sure that these letters will be very gratefully received, for as men grow more famous and assured in their careers so their friends deem it the less necessary to praise them. It is then that incense from afar smells the sweeter.

And it is, after all, a very harmless, even a gracious thing to do to write and thank a painter for his picture, a poet for his verses, or a dancer for her dances—and you may be sure, in most cases, that they have had enough kicks to be grateful for your ha'pence.

It is yet a little astonishing how much attention the great ones of the earth do pay to these casual communications. I once knew a village postmaster who started to teach himself Greek. After some weeks' labour it occurred to him that Gladstone would be interested to hear about it, so he wrote and told him. Curiously enough, Gladstone was, and sent him some lively translations of his and a few words of encouragement on a postcard. This spurred the postmaster to further efforts. So he communicated his ambition to Cardinal Newman. This produced a signed copy of the "Apologia" and an exhortation to persevere. I know not how many other great Victorians were made repositories of his confidence, but I know that to this day he has a handsome little autograph collection.

It is utterly mistaken to suppose that these spontaneous epistles are dealt with always by unsympathetic secretaries. Any number of mighty people are fond enough to open their own letters and answer them in their own script—and I dare swear that if you sent a note of congratulation to a new President of the American Republic

or a newly elected French Academician or an Earl lately become a Marquis you would receive a short but courteous reply.

J. B. STERNDALE BENNETT.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

IT is now fourteen years since Chaliapine and his incomparable art first became known to the British public in a brilliant operatic season which has remained, for many of us, one of the most moving and unforgettable æsthetic experiences of our lives, and the last and most vivid musical recollection of that far-off world that lies on the other side of August, 1914. Since then he has only appeared on the concert platform in this country, and naturally those who had been so electrified on that memorable first appearance have taken care not to renew the acquaintance under such unfavourable circumstances for fear of tarnishing the glamour of such a unique experience—all the more so as Chaliapine's reputation as a concert-singer is not of the highest. His appearance at the Albert Hall on October 11th, therefore, was the first opportunity we have had of hearing him under conditions approximating at least to those under which we first heard him, and it was with mingled surprise and relief that one observed how little his marvellous art, in both its aspects, musical and dramatic, had lost in the course of the fourteen long years that have elapsed. His histrionic powers, indeed, seem to be entirely unimpaired, and if his voice has lost some of its old resonance and flexibility, his skill in using it has, if anything, increased. One could have wished, however, that renewed acquaintance could have been made through a more congenial medium than the "Mozart and Salieri" of Rimsky-Korsakov—a feeble pastiche of Mozart carried out in the manner of Dargomijsky's "Stone Guest"—and a single superb and therefore tantalizing scene from "Boris Godounov." The choice was, no doubt, made for reasons of stage-craft, but it is to be hoped that if we are to hear Chaliapine again it will be in music more worthy of his magnificent artistry.

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The way in which the difficulties in temporarily converting the Albert Hall into an opera-house were surmounted reflects great credit on all concerned, and particularly on Mr. Frank Collins, the stage director, and M. Vladimir Polunin, who was responsible for the *décor*. The illusion, though naturally far from perfect, was very much more complete than one would have expected it to be. The rest of a rather weirdly assorted programme was made up of movements from Mozart's *Requiem*, in which the Royal Choral Society, as always, overbalanced the orchestra to such an extent that it was almost impossible to hear the latter at all, and a set of purely orchestral items devoted to Russian music, of which the March and Scherzo from Prokofieff's "Love of the Three Oranges" was the most successful.

\* \* \*

"Miss Julie," now running at Playroom Six, is one of the best examples of Strindberg's early naturalistic period. Its power lies in its swift movement, its directness of attack, and the inevitability of its conclusion—the essence of all true tragedy. Technically, it is perhaps most to be admired for the perfection of balance which is maintained between the psychological and the physiological, as shown particularly in the scene which leads up to the seduction by Miss Julie of her father's footman and in the subsequent change in the mental attitude of the protagonists towards each other. The actual means by which the conclusion is reached may seem a little grotesque to the modern mind, but one must remember that the play was written forty years ago, when Miss Julie's predicament was much more serious than it would be considered to-day. Fine plays demand accomplished acting, and it was hard lines on Mr. Douglas Burbidge, who played the footman with exactly the right blend of servility and self-assurance, that he had to waste part of his talent in covering the deficiencies of Miss Hilda Maude, who is not yet suffi-

ciently experienced for the part of Miss Julie. Miss Maude, who is a director of the theatre, would serve its interests, as well as her own, better by contenting herself with less exacting parts for a year or two.

\* \* \*

"Poppies of Flanders," a film made by British International Pictures, Ltd., and "trade shown" last week, is based on a story by "Sapper" and deals, as may be imagined, with the Great War. The story itself is of the most commonplace and hackneyed type, reeking with sentimentality and, if taken seriously (and such stories, one supposes, are taken seriously by a large section of the public), really demoralizing in its superficiality and the falsity of its values. It tells how a young Guards officer, scion of a noble house, is banished by his family for his misdemeanours to South Africa; how he continues there to drink himself to death until suddenly reformed by a pretty young woman who walks into his house one day and decides to spring-clean it; how, when he finds out by chance that she loves another man, he pretends to take to drink again in order to release her; how during the war he "finds his manhood," wins the D.C.M., sacrifices his life for his friend, &c. The War is a noble, sentimental affair, the great purifier, full of excellent opportunities for self-sacrifice. It is to be hoped that the reviving British film industry will be able to find rather better material than this to work upon: technically, the film is good, and some of the pictures are intelligently taken, but Mr. Jameson Thomas and Miss Eve Gray, though they both act well at times, are unable to bring the characters to life.

\* \* \*

On Sunday, October 16th, Mr. Arthur Rubenstein broadcasted an amusing pianoforte recital, chiefly of modern Spanish works. Mr. Rubenstein is a brilliant technician, with such an abundance of vigour and rhythmical *élan* that he carries all before him. He is just the man to interpret Albeniz and de Falla, dancing his way through horrible difficulties with an ease that delights and a dazzling assurance that never lets one forget he is accomplishing a *tour de force*. This manner may just pass with Chopin's Barcarolle, but he was well advised not to play anything requiring more depth. The hard and superficial brilliance of Albeniz's "Triana" made it, perhaps, the most successful number in his programme.

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One of the most representative exhibitions of modern French painting that have been held in London recently has just opened at the Warren Gallery, Maddox Street. It is divided between "Les Jeunes" and "Quelques Maîtres": the latter designation includes Derain, Utrillo, Matisse, Friesz, Vlaminck, Roualt, and Dufy, while few of the younger painters, with the exception of Kisling, de Waroquier, and possibly Favory, have had their work exhibited in London before. It is not possible here to give detailed description or criticism, but these young painters have one thing in common—their remarkable technical accomplishment and their complete lack of amateurishness such as many young English painters show. Some of them have other qualities, however, as well—Soutine a bold vitality, influenced clearly by Roualt, Fornari sometimes a fine colour and a very pleasing quality of paint, Kisling and de Waroquier sound drawing. Among the "maîtres" Utrillo's "Château à St. Ouen" is an exquisite piece of colour, Derain's "Nu" and "Jeune Fille" are good examples, Matisse shows an early "Fleurs" and a fine "Portrait de Femme," Dufy some attractive water-colours, and Roualt, besides a very remarkable study of figures ("Baigneuses"), some interesting and on the whole successful paintings on tiles.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—  
Saturday, October 22nd.—

Mendelssohn's "Elijah," Albert Hall, 2.30 (Royal Choral Society).

Thibaud, Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

The New Philharmonic String Quartet, Museum Lecture Theatre, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

Miss J. S. Mackinlay's matinée, Aeolian Hall.

Sunday, October 23rd.—

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe on "Cromwell and Mussolini: Our Dictator and Theirs," South Place, 11.

Monday, October 24th.—

Mr. Lloyd George, Mrs. Philip Snowden, and Mr. Duff Cooper on "Disarmament," Queen's Hall, 8 (League of Nations Union Meeting).

Joan Elwes and Keith Falkner, Songs and Duets, Grotian Hall, 8.30.

Tuesday, October 25th.—

"Home Chat," by Noel Coward, Duke of York's.

Mr. Hartley Withers on "The City and How it Works," Caxton Hall, 10.30 a.m. (Economic League).

Bach Cantata Club, St. Margaret's, Westminster, 8.15.

Wednesday, October 26th.—

Sierra's "The Kingdom of God," at the Strand.

Ethel Barns and Jehanne Chambard, Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.

Professor F. T. G. Hobday on "Some Diseases Conveyed to Man from Animals and their Prevention," Royal Institute of Public Health, 37, Russell Sq., 4 p.m.

Mr. C. Delisle Burns on "Fascism—The Super-Bourgeois State," Kingsway Hall, 8.30.

Thursday, October 27th.—

Mr. A. B. Cook, Lantern Lecture, "China, Old and New," Central Library, 598, Fulham Road, 8.

Captain R. C. Morton on "Into Kashmir with a Concert Party," Chiswick Public Library, 8.

Mr. Osbert Sitwell reading his own Poems, Poetry Bookshop, 6.

Friday, October 28th.—

Reginald Paul, Piano Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.15.

Zlatko Balokovic, Violin Recital, Aeolian Hall, 8.15. Thomas Marshall, Pianoforte Recital, Aeolian Hall, 8.15. On the Wireless: Debate between Mr. G. B. Shaw and Mr. G. K. Chesterton, "Do We Agree?"

OMICRON.

## THE DOG

BESIDE the gabled walls of the sea  
(The Sun a dog, barking shade of a tree)

Pompey

Romping

Noses the ground

"Look, my mistress, what I have found . . .  
A worm, the one life left in a heart" . . .

"Pompey, Pompey, leave it apart.

When the dog-whining dawn light

Nosed for my heart, whined in fright,

With a sly high animal

Whimpering half-frightened call

To worlds outside our consciousness,

It found no heart inside my dress.

At the cross-roads nailed is it

Deep-impaled for a rat to eat.

My love took it and drove the stakes

Through flesh and blood . . . it lies and quakes.

All day the neighbours dig it up

That they may dine, that they may sup,

Nose like dogs to find one cleft

With blood . . . eat what the rat has left!"

EDITH SITWELL.

## THEATRES.

## ALDWYCH.

Nightly at 8.15. Matinees, Wednesday and Friday, at 2.30.  
"THARK."

TOM WALLS, Mary Brough, RALPH LYNN.

## AMBASSADORS. (Ger. 4460.) EVENINGS, 8.40. MAT., TUES. &amp; FRI., 2.30.

OWEN NARES in "THE FANATICS."

Miles Malleson's "OUTSPOKEN" Play.

LEON M. LION'S PRODUCTION.

## COURT, Sloane Square. (Sloane 5137.) NIGHTLY at 8.30.

Komisarjevsky's Production of "PAUL I."

MATINEES, Thursday and Saturday, at 2.30.

## THE NATION &amp; ATHENÆUM

## THEATRES.—continued.

## CRITERION THEATRE. (Ger. 3844.) 8.30. MATS., TUES., SAT., 2.30.

GUY NEWALL in

"WHEN BLUE HILLS LAUGHED."

## DRURY LANE. EVGS., 8.15. MATS., WED. and SAT., at 2.30.

"THE DESERT SONG." A New Musical Play.

HARRY WELCHMAN, EDITH DAY, GENE GERRARD.

## FORTUNE THEATRE. Regent 1307.

NIGHTLY, at 8.30. MATINEES, THURS. &amp; SAT., at 2.30.

"ON APPROVAL." By FREDERICK LONSDALE.

ELLIS JEFFREYS, RONALD SQUIRE.

## KINGSWAY. (Gerr. 4032.) Nightly, 8.15. MATS., WED., THURS. &amp; SAT., 2.30.

JEAN CADELL in

"MARIGOLD."

## LYRIC Hammersmith. Riverside 3012. EVERY EVENING at 8.

Matinees, Wednesday &amp; Saturday, 2.30.

The OLD VIC COMPANY with SYBIL THORNDIKE in

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE."

## NEW (Reg. 4456.) "THE BELOVED VAGABOND."

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## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

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RESUMABLY every loyal Conservative will read three books just published: "King Edward VII., a Biography," Vol. II., by Sir Sidney Lee (Macmillan, £1 11s. 6d.); "Queen Mary, a Life and Intimate Study," by Kathleen Woodward (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.); and "Speeches by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, 1912-1926" (Hodder & Stoughton, 21s.). It will be a severe task and test of loyalty even to the most loyal. To the ordinary man, who takes the Royal Family with a grain of salt, of these three books only that about Queen Mary is readable. Even the Prince's popularity will hardly stand the publication of more than one volume of speeches in which, following royal precedent, he has to say nothing in exactly the same way to everyone from Montreal to Kamujoma. The only question raised by this book is why the public speeches of Princes, already verging towards middle-age, should be in the style of a schoolboy of fourteen trying to write an English essay? The first volume of Sidney Lee's "King Edward VII." was, to all intents and purposes, completely unreadable. The second volume is rather better; the diligent reader may glean a few facts about royal life which he did not know before, as, for instance (page 395), that after dinner at Windsor "the Queen never sits down, and stands in the middle of the centre drawing-room." But it is a dreary book, almost entirely composed of facts which everyone knows, written with an air of depressed conscientiousness. Very different is Miss Woodward's remarkable book about Queen Mary. Here at last you see the kings go riding by; here everything is purple and gold and superlatives and blue eyes and fair hair and more super-superlatives. Miss Woodward's ecstatic adoration of the Queen has only one inconvenience: it does not make for perspicuity, and sometimes it is difficult to know whether she is speaking of the Queen, her mother, or her aunt. But in the end her point is clear enough, and we see that Queen Mary is the most beautiful (her portrait in colours is on the jacket), the most queenly and kind and intelligent and artistic and simple and earnest and sincere and beloved-of-Labour-Leaders woman and queen that has ever lived to grow more mellowed and more beautiful, according to the verdict of the late Mlle. Tatry—and who should have known this better than the late Mlle. Tatry, who was a just critic rather than an indulgent one, and had the honour of having "dressed" Princess May in the days of White Lodge—every day. If one has to write about Kings, and Queens, and Princes of Wales in the twentieth century, Miss Woodward's is obviously the way to do it, and it is a great pity that Sir Sidney Lee did not do for King Edward what she has done for Queen Mary.

\* \* \*

For it cannot really be said that King Edward comes very well out of Sir Sidney Lee's monument of oblivion. Among many other things which its weight of 1,500 pages will finally obliterate is the legend of the King's profound political wisdom and brilliant diplomacy. Politically, King Edward was simply a nuisance. Mr. Gladstone and old age had finally broken down any inclination in Queen Victoria to be something more than a merely Constitutional Monarch. When the King succeeded his mother, there was very little left to him except to go riding by in the various uniforms which he loved so well and in which his

loyal subjects loved to see him. But, encouraged apparently by Lord Esher, he was not content to reign without ruling. In a niggling way he was always trying to exercise or recover some "royal prerogative." His method was niggling because he had no political courage, and whenever a Minister was firm, the King immediately gave way. He had, therefore, in fact little influence and less power, but he was always trying to assert himself by appointing someone an Honorary Admiral off his own bat or by getting some job for one of his friends or protégés or by insisting that as Head of the Army and Navy he must be kept informed of where a regiment or where a fleet was being moved to, or by excluding some M.P. of whose opinions he disapproved from his official garden-party. The appointment business, which seems to be a mania with all sovereigns, is of little importance, as a rule, except for its sordid snobbery. But when a Constitutional Monarch like Edward, who has not the courage openly to attempt to win back royal power, niggles away at his unfortunate Ministers, insisting that he must be "kept informed" and "give advice" about everything, he must often be an intolerable nuisance. How busy Cabinet Ministers put up with the incessant interference of this kind which poor Mr. Arnold-Forster endured at the War Office, one cannot understand.

\* \* \*

The advice of a wise constitutional king might, of course, be of value to a Minister. But there is no proof in these volumes that Edward had any political wisdom. I may be prejudiced, but to me it seems that whenever his opinion on a political question is known, it is a wrong opinion. His opinions were, in fact, merely those of a stereotyped Tory. He was in favour of "Chinese Slavery," and against women's suffrage; the Hague Conference was "humbug," and the Army and Navy Estimates were never high enough; and so on. King Edward's political wisdom was the political wisdom of the present Duke of Northumberland or of the average member of the Cavalry Club. Even a Conservative Government sometimes found his advice embarrassing. It is more difficult to decide what power and influence Edward had in foreign affairs, because here there is still some reticence. The impression left by the official biography is that he had considerably less influence than is usually imagined, but that what influence he had was bad. There is no doubt that his perpetual foreign tours, in competition with the Kaiser, were a constant source of irritation and suspicion in Europe. He may have had personal tact and charm, but he was a clumsy diplomatist. It is a thoroughly bad thing for a Constitutional Monarch, who ultimately has no responsibility, to be allowed any direct interference in international negotiations. In fact, the world no longer has any use for kings with power. Let them go riding by in their uniforms and their smiles for us to look at, and we will applaud the spectacle, as we applaud Miss Woodward's Queen Mary with her genius for arranging furniture and for winning the hearts of babies and Labour Leaders. For, as Miss Woodward says herself, "when she passes through the streets of London, is not the verdict: There goes a Woman?"

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## INCORRIGIBLE "F. E."

**Law, Life, and Literature.** By the EARL OF BIRKENHEAD. 2 vols. (Hodder & Stoughton. 42s.)

THERE is no public man in England quite so careless of his own reputation as Lord Birkenhead. He is prepared to put his name to anything, being gloriously sure of his public: more sure of it to-day than he was when, as he says, he faced the diminished fortune consequent upon his acceptance of the Woolsack knowing that his pen would avail to bridge the gap between the Lord Chancellor's meagre £10,000 a year and a tolerable income.

We need ask for no more candid admission of Lord Birkenhead's estimate of his own standing than these two volumes. They are made up of twenty miscellaneous chapters, strung together with as much continuity as a daily cause list, and oddly contrasted in substance and manner. When, for instance, Lord Birkenhead is dealing with problems of legal practice or philosophy, he appears in his proper character, as an acute lawyer and a sophisticated man of the world. He discusses the laws of divorce, the function of the King's Proctor, or the costs of litigation shrewdly and with an agreeable vigour of style. True, he is no less diffuse here than elsewhere; but he is exhibiting an adult intelligence playing upon actual things. These chapters read as though they had been dictated at top speed and been read over at any rate once.

It is otherwise with a good half-dozen of the rest. They are of a kind to leave upon the mind of a fairly critical reader the impression that Lord Birkenhead, willing to oblige with a public address or an article—on letter-writers or careers, on Gladstone or on oratory—had handed the job over to a secretary with the hint that it might be as well to throw in plenty of hackneyed allusions and all the Sunday paper "tosh." The long chapter on Eloquence is typical. It is padded out with extracts from the most familiar orations, not a few of them to be found in any old-fashioned manual of elocution, and including even Johnson's invention of Pitt on "the atrocious crime of being a young man." The author's sense of fitness is sublime. He can pay tribute to the Sermon on the Mount as "the most superb specimen of rhetoric in English," and go on to pick out Horatio Bottomley as one of the greatest masters of public speech. He can produce an address on Walter Scott for which the Scott Society of Edinburgh must have been tempted to award the wooden spoon, and of King Edward he can say with staggering solemnity that "he was neither a cold nor an ascetic man." He praises England in terms which, if used by an American or a German of his own land, would have moved Lord Birkenhead himself to fury.

"Law, Life, and Literature," belongs to a class of books notoriously slipshod, but even in its own class the writing would be conspicuous. It contains scores of sentences equal to this:—

"It is a curious fact that often it is discovered that, although the respondent has formed a new alliance, he or she is not alone in that."

Lord Birkenhead can write, "However mortal a toll is taken of human life." A girl of sixteen is to him "a female child sixteen years old." And Keats is "He of the Magic Casements" writing to "Her who was unromantically christened Brawne." The lawyer whose championship of a branch of the Anglican Church inspired the greatest of Chesterton's lyrics ought surely to know that surnames are not given at the font. He will, however, say anything, no matter how nonsensical, that comes to the end of his tongue or pen; for example, that the club rooms of the Oxford Union "are hardly inferior to those of any club in the world," or that the admirable methods of the English law courts "have been largely, if not completely, reproduced in the United States." He alone in England finds the assaults upon Mr. Lloyd George in Lady Oxford's books both "surprising" and "inexplicable."

The ridiculous little blunders scattered throughout show plainly enough that the book was not deemed worthy of

even a few hours of serious revision. Lord Birkenhead speaks of Manning in 1887 as "the future pre-eminent Cardinal," and of Joseph Chamberlain at the same date as an anti-monarchist. He mistakes the age of Chamberlain at the beginning of the Tariff campaign. He puts Lady Mary Montagu in the seventeenth century and Mrs. Carlyle in the eighteenth! He thinks that the poems of Pope and his contemporaries were written in alexandrines. He calls a book an "output," and explains mincing speech as the clipping of words. He speaks of the change from the modern to the ancient capital of India as "the removal of the ancient capital to Delhi"; and when Curzon describes Job Charnock as "huckstering with the natives," Lord Birkenhead springs to the defence of the amusing founder of Calcutta in the belief that he is being accused of pilfering. And so it goes.

## CALCULATED INDISCRETIONS

**Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Bart., G.C.B., D.S.O.: His Life and Diaries.** By MAJOR-GENERAL SIR C. E. CALLWELL, K.C.B. With a Preface by MARSHAL FOCH. TWO vols. (Cassell. 42s.)

THE writer of this review once had the privilege of hearing Sir Henry Wilson speak. Almost every word of that speech aroused his passionate disagreement; but it remains in his mind as the cleverest he ever heard. It was clear, masterful, and persuasive; ruthlessly logical in developing the speaker's point of view, and subtly indicative of a measureless contempt for every other standpoint.

This amazing gift of exposition was accompanied and sustained by boundless self-confidence, and reinforced by a magnetic personality that made Wilson beloved by his friends and servants, and almost idolized by many of those who came under his influence at the Staff College or on the General Staff. His personal fascination combined with his clarity of utterance to gain him the ear of men in high places outside his own profession. In many respects he was admirably qualified to interpret between the Army and the Government, or between Allied Armies with a common object but different ideas as to its attainment. As Director of Military Operations, Liaison Officer with Generals Nivelle and Pétain and personal friend of Foch, Military Representative on the Supreme War Council, and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, he had unusual opportunities for playing his pre-destined rôle. The life and diaries of such a man, filling such posts, during the greatest war in history and the subsequent peace negotiations, could hardly be lacking in interest.

Unfortunately, Wilson had other qualities which give these volumes an interest of scandal as well as of instruction. His intellectual arrogance made him impudent of opposition, and no sense of loyalty to his civil or military superiors stood in the way of his intriguing against Ministers or colleagues who failed to adopt the course he considered right. "I am confident myself that, if we manage things properly, we have Asquith dead." . . . "I urged Gwynne to push along and turn this Government out." . . . "The long duel between me and Robertson has ended in his complete defeat"—these are typical of entry after entry in the diaries, and one wonders what such typical British soldiers as Monk, Moore, or Wellington would have said to them.

Peculiarly damaging to his reputation is the record of his relations with Kitchener. A fanatic of conscription and a believer in a short war, Wilson lost no opportunity of decrying both the Territorials and the New Armies. He jeered repeatedly at "His (Kitchener's) ridiculous and preposterous army . . . these mobs," and these expressions of contempt were not confined to his diary or to private letters. Sir C. E. Callwell admits that:—

"Wilson's influence with Sir J. French's entourage was strong. A believer in compulsion, he consistently and effectively ridiculed the Secretary of State's designs and intentions."

His supreme scorn, however, was reserved for "the Frocks"—that is to say, almost every civilian statesman whom he met; Asquith, Grey, Curzon, that "funny old

thing" Lord Haldane, "that ass President Wilson." Even Mr. Lloyd George, hailed at first as a saviour, becomes "only a super-Gladstone—and a dangerous visionary at that." Characteristically enough, while Wilson was resentful, often properly resentful of civilian interference with technical military questions, he never seems to have doubted for a moment the infallibility of his own political views—"Foch has a supreme contempt for such ideas as the League of Nations, Mandatories, &c. I cordially agree with him." The plenary meeting of the League was merely "nauseating nonsense about peace." The Irish question could be settled only by "determined shooting." Lord Milner was all wrong about Egypt. Mr. Edwin Montagu's Indian administration merely "favours the rebels against the loyalists." Arrangements for soldiers to vote at the 1918 election were, "All bribes, and disgusting, as it is against the law." President Wilson's refusal to negotiate with the Hohenzollerns was "making sure of Bolshevism."

The ceaseless iteration of these outbursts ends by becoming merely wearisome, and conclusively disproves his biographer's contention that Wilson was "a profound thinker." Profound thinkers are apt to pay more attention to Cromwell's immortal plea, "I beseech you, if ye be not *possibly* mistaken." It is a juster estimate of the man to say that Wilson was a very clear and acute thinker within the limits of his perceptions; but these limits were too narrow for his claim to greatness to be established.

It would be futile to deny that Wilson was a man of marked ability, or that he rendered valuable services. In the organization of the General Staff and in the preparations for dispatch of the Expeditionary Force, he showed not only imagination but a capacity for solid routine work of which he might not have been suspected. He kept his head better than most at the crisis of the retreat from Mons, and at more crises than one he played an important part in securing Anglo-French co-operation. Whether he was right in his views on the supreme direction of the war, and whether the triumph of his views was worth the means he employed, is a question for history to decide.

The book, at any rate, is an historical document that must be reckoned with. It goes behind the scenes of the Curragh incident, the Anglo-French military conversations before the war, the fall of the Asquith Cabinet, the struggle for "unity of command." Wilson's pen-pictures of the peace conference at Versailles, prejudiced as they are, are full of touches that recall the opening chapters of Mr. Keynes's "Economic Consequences of the Peace." Of even greater interest to some readers will be the comings and goings of agitated Ministers at home, at the time of the threatened triple alliance strike, the talk of military precautions, and whisperings of revolution. On the Irish Treaty, Wilson's views were those of a red-hot Ulsterman; but his picture of official irresolution and divided counsels is painfully convincing. It is to his honour that he protested against "Black-and-Tan" reprisals with even more than his usual energy.

As to the propriety of these revelations, it is useless to express an opinion. One either believes that material acquired in positions of confidence should be treated, for a generation, with a certain reticence, or one does not. To most people these volumes will seem either too indiscreet or not indiscreet enough. The author tells us that he has excluded some "forcible expressions concerning individuals." Reading what remains, it is difficult to understand the principle of these excisions. If the desire was to avoid pain and offence to individuals, the process should have been carried much further. If the public is asked to judge between Sir Henry Wilson and his opponents, the material should be complete.

Apart from this, the biographer has done his work well. The diaries are skilfully woven into the narrative; the connecting narrative itself is very good, and the notes are sufficient for elucidation without being tiresomely numerous, and there is an excellent index. Moreover, while Sir C. E. Callwell writes throughout as a fervent admirer of his hero, his admiration is so far "on this side idolatry" that he can frankly admit, on occasion, Wilson's errors of judgment, and even supply an answer (as in the matter of H.E. shell) to his attacks on the Government. His account of Wilson's murder and burial is dignified and restrained.

## FICTION

**The Financier.** By THEODORE DREISER. (Constable. 7s. 6d.)  
**Vanguard.** By L. W. VEDRENNE. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)  
**John Fanning's Legacy.** By NAOMI ROYDE-SMITH. (Constable. 7s. 6d.)

**Vestal Fire.** By COMPTON MACKENZIE. (Cassells. 7s. 6d.)  
**Uncle Tom Pudd.** By LAURENCE HOUSMAN. (Cape. 6s.)

**Mr. Balcony.** By C. H. B. KITCHIN. (Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.)  
**The Miracle Boy.** By LOUIS GOLDING. (Knopf. 7s. 6d.)

**The Blessing of Pan.** By LORD DUNSANY. (Putnam. 7s. 6d.)  
**The Arrow, and two Other Stories.** By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

**The Last Devil.** By SIGNE TOKSVIG. (Faber & Gwyer. 7s. 6d.)  
**Jack O'Manory.** By G. B. STERN. (Chapman & Hall. 7s. 6d.)

**The Bacchante and the Nun.** By ROBERT HICHENS. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

**New Wine.** By GEOFFREY MOSS. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)  
**The Fifth Pestilence, and The Tinkling Cymbal and Sounding**

**Brass.** By ALEXEI REMIZOV. Translated from the Russian with a Preface by ALEC BROWN. (Wishart. 7s. 6d.)

"THE FINANCIER" is another of Mr. Dreiser's vast and faithful canvases of American life. The title indicates the subject-matter, and Mr. Dreiser's acquaintance with the operation of stocks seems to be as detailed as his knowledge of police procedure in "An American Tragedy." But his information is used less effectively in this novel, and the lack of selection, the unnecessary accumulation of detail, become wearisome. The moralizing passages, too, sincere always, but sometimes platitudinous, are too numerous. All this lessens greatly the effect of Mr. Dreiser's realistic imagination, which of its kind is unrivalled in contemporary literature. His characters, therefore, are not so real as those in his other books. They are social types, like those of Mr. Wells and Mr. Galsworthy, and not human beings who happen to be in one class or another, in this occupation or in that. Their prejudices are those of their class, their interests those of their occupation; and this, and not their reality as human beings, is their chief interest for us. Mr. Dreiser is one of the most clumsy practitioners of literature

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living, and when his imagination becomes smothered under vast masses of information, he ceases to be interesting, and becomes, indeed, difficult to read.

Mr. Vedrenne is both an original and an honest writer. "Vanguard" is such a good novel that the surprise is that it is not better. The characterization is independent; there is hardly a blurred impressionistic stroke; and all has a degree of actuality well beyond the reach of the average serious novel. Certain of the scenes, the motor-car race in France, the row after it, the fight between Legrane and Corner, are extremely vivid. The characters are freshly observed; the women are particularly good, and free from sentimentality. What makes the novel less excellent it is difficult to see at first. It is partly, perhaps, the fact that the chief figure with his policy of "All or nothing" is not quite convincingly conceived; the implications of such a policy would have been much more catastrophic, and in a much shorter time, than they are in the story. The happy ending, at any rate, is false; Mr. Vedrenne has to exert himself to persuade us of its likelihood; and, after all that he can do, it has an appearance of being engineered. All through, indeed, the author's imagination seems to be fettered by an inhibiting conception of what is English, a conception partly genuine, partly a cliché.

"John Fanning's Legacy" is a puzzling book. Both as a novel of character and a mystery story it is overloaded. For a long time no central theme emerges, and when it does appear it is muddled up again, until, near the end, either too late or too soon, we have it at last. The secretary of a celebrated novelist is left by will a commission to write her employer's biography. In a number of letters we see her trying to gather data, and being met by inexplicable obstruction. One or two of her discoveries disconcert her, but it is a shock when she finds out that her former employer was a murderer, among other things. She destroys the evidence, goes out of her mind, and dies. There are interesting passages in the story, but the characters are unreal, and the action, drawn out for three-quarters of the book, and rushed at the end, is unconvincing.

"Vestal Fire" and "Uncle Tom Pudd" are novels about odd characters. Though its scene is laid in a Mediterranean island, often described, and within sight of Vesuvius, the former story is one of the most amusing that its author has written. The types he portrays are well known, but rarely have they been classified so exhaustively and amusingly, and with such happy detachment. The farce is sometimes broad, but not broader than the theme demands. The book is a spirited, accomplished and sometimes brilliant exercise in humour bordering on farce. "Uncle Tom Pudd" is a study of one odd character. It is skilfully if somewhat too leisurely executed, and has a touch of sentimentality here and there.

"Mr. Balcony," followed by "The Miracle Boy," "The Blessing of Pan," and "The Arrow," heads a list of fantastic novels. Its fantasy, however, is of a peculiar kind. The other three stories are purely fanciful. Mr. Golding's boy who raises the dead, Lord Dunsany's resurrected Pan, Mr. Morley's man with the invisible arrow transfixing him and sticking out through his back, are intended to be make-believe. Mr. Kitchin's characters, on the other hand, are intended as actual people; his theme is contemporary life as an intelligent mind sees it; and the fantasy is a calculated means to set the figures in motion, to show the relativity of character and the irrationality of action. The fantasy actually does this, but not exactly and inevitably. The book, indeed, is very difficult to judge. It has wit and style, but the technique is not really adequate if Mr. Kitchin's aim was to illuminate by a fitful flashlight a number of people's lives. One feels that in the background there is a criticism of life implied, but it never becomes tangible and effective.

The difference in reality between this novel and the other three I have mentioned may be seen in the different quality of the writing. Mr. Golding's style in "The Miracle Boy" is more oblivious of economy than it has ever been before. The book is unworthy of his talents, wordily meretricious in the descriptive passages, and melodramatic in the more exciting scenes. The reason for this, one imagines, is that the theme of the novel has never been imaginatively real to him; he writes so uneconomically because he is writing about nothing. Lord Dunsany writes more economically about the same thing; it seems to be a secret of the Irish and sometimes

it can be employed delightfully. "The Blessing of Pan" has charming pages, but the invention is neither very felicitous nor very abundant. Mr. Morley has some of Mr. Golding's lack of economy and absence of imagination, but his stories are so slight that it does not matter much.

In spite of bad faults, "The Last Devil" is a promising novel. The descriptions are vivid; the atmosphere of evil in the earlier chapters is not entirely meretricious. But the story goes to pieces on the Last Devil, who, of course, is not a devil at all; and though parts of the action towards the end show a romantic imagination, the book by this time is ruined. One has the impression that Miss Toksvig is a much better writer than this volume lets her appear.

"Jack O'Manory" is a collection of slight and facile magazine stories. "The Bacchante and the Nun" is a novel of theatrical life. The scene of "New Wine" is laid in Roumania.

Remizov is at his best, Prince Mirsky has told us, in "The Fifth Pestilence" and "The Tinkling Cymbal and Sounding Brass," and the latter story, he has said, is a masterpiece. Moreover, in his interesting preface to this volume, Mr. Alec Brown compares his author with Dostoevsky. Going by the translation, which seems to be an excellent one, natural, lively, and vigorous, one simply cannot understand this. Obviously Remizov is a writer of original and grotesque imagination, at once a delightful and a "disagreeable" writer; but he appears to be as little comparable to Dostoevsky as Katherine Mansfield is to Emily Brontë; he is not on the same scale, and has only a fraction of the power. It is to be hoped that the rest of his writings will be translated; for though, on the present evidence, he is hardly a great writer, he is obviously a fascinating, original and very accomplished one, interesting both for his very peculiar and sometimes really profound imagination, and for the effectiveness and novelty of the means he employs to express it. For this reason, and for the excellence of the translation, this book should be read.

EDWIN MUIR.

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In the catalogue just made there is no lack of eminent names, but the publications on which they confer their notability apparently seek and certainly achieve no uncommon eminence. Mr. Wolfe, for instance, has been pursuing the capricious spirit of translation through the gardens and glens of the Greek Anthology, in which so many of our poets have pleasantly exercised their personality, fancy, and craftsmanship. Without pressing the question of how much Meleager, Rufinus, and their fellow-singers abides in his English pieces, one may complain that the vagueness of some of his phraseology does not answer either to Greek or English standards. What shall the uninitiated make of this complete poem:—

"Were I a blossom, so might I loveliest  
mislead with rose the candour of your breast"?

Apart from that awkward "loveliest," what would be the point of misleading candour with rose? One is aware of the language of flowers, but this is the language of nothing. Another instance: it is headed "Socrates":—

"Drink deep of truth and wisdom, where with these  
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And think with hemlock Athens in the grave  
her prophet saved, herself, who could not save!"

Here Socrates is apparently exhorted not to say it with flowers but to think with hemlock; what he is expected to think might have puzzled even him in his best days. This lazy obscurity, far from being rare in Mr. Wolfe's translations, lies in the path all too often, and sadly spoils the air of frank and vivid comprehension worn by the writer at a first glance. It is only fair that an example of his more nearly Hellenic rewording should close this criticism:—

" Stranger, when passing by this tomb of mine,  
offer Anacreon one more glass of wine."

Mr. Binyon, whose work in verse has a general similarity with that of Mr. Wolfe, has also the Hellenic touch in his literary diversion, but merely in the names of some characters in it: for "Sophro the Wise" is a play for children, with "designs by Helen Binyon, tunes by Margaret Binyon"—a charming toy. We conclude its easy and trim versification, its gentle excitements with a cordial share in the chorus:—

" Lead forth the plum-pudding, let flame the mince-pies  
And Hey! diddle-diddle for Sophro the Wise."

Another portent of Christmas, besides the weather, is the issue of a series of what we may call chiefly carolese poems, and Messrs. Faber & Gwyer "The Ariel Poems," in small decorated pamphlets. The decorations are pleasing to the sense, but a little incongruous; thus, beneath Mr. Gibson's ambiguous title "The Early Whistler," we have a view of some hens and a cockerel, a brave bird but not so addicted to whistling. As for the poems, Mr. Hardy looks back to choirs of angels with his wonted majesty: Mr. Chesterton rejoices with clanging hyperbole: Mr. Sassoon's "Nativity" alludes tenderly to the Christmas of the heart; and Mr. Eliot's dramatic fragment recounts one of the Wise Men's experience with an excellent plainness and originality. Mr. de la Mare and Sir Henry Newbolt write characteristically on other themes for reflection.

In reprinting "The Listeners" and "Motley," the numerous beauties of which still gleam as fresh and fine as ever, the publishers have obtained the attractive assistance of Bold's woodcuts. This artist, although unequal in the relevance and the appeal of his designs, has produced quite a worthy embellishment for Mr. de la Mare's work, his tailpieces introducing us to a satisfying region of plantains and marguerites, spriggy trees and sable groves, pyramidal mounts and ingenious turrets. It is a pity that the coloured fantasies on the wrappers were not included inside the books.

From a well-ornamented de la Mare to Mrs. Farjeon's new volume is by no means a depressing or difficult transition. She has already established herself among children's poets. She is full of the tunes which they hear with approval, and her way of writing is like actual speaking among the smaller sort, and choice "telling stories." These remarks are not meant to limit her poetical possibilities to verse for children, but that is the sphere in which her gifts and sympathies for the most part move so cheerfully and freely. At Christmas she cannot fail. The mood of genial respect induced by her taste and skill does not decline when the reviewer passes to a quite different book, Mr. Mann's "The Sisters," six substantial narrative poems in rhyming couplets. There is no doubt of Mr. Mann's patient merit; he is old-fashioned not merely in the form of verse which he uses but also in the steady avoidance of what might superficially beguile a public, or chime with the easy satisfactions of the moment. With definite observation of human interests comes descriptive vocabulary, and in that respect, as in the curious force of his situations, Mr. Mann at his best commands the recognition of any who enjoy their George Crabbe. A superfluity of explanation at present impedes his appeal, nor is his versification quite various enough to carry the changing topic on in the master style, but his feeling and insight are genuine power. His openings are often singularly unpromising:—

" It was a narrow shave! A moment's doubt

And he had lost that night the last train out"—  
whence, nevertheless, he enters upon a remarkable tragic study ("The Last Train").

Power was the anticipated distinction of a volume entitled "Pit-Head Poems" by a miner; but Mr. Boden

instead gives us generally the elegance of the Housman school, in which he is very dexterous. Lightfoot lads, Grecian gods, rose-lipt girls appear afresh to the tune of place-names and young desire. Mr. Boden writes well, but the day will come when, yielding simply to his own experience, he gives us "more matter and less art." "For"—to quote Mrs. Bartlett—"Writing is a Lavishment!" She has a right to speak in this way, for she tells us that she has assisted in the conduct of twelve International Prize Poetry Contests. She lavishes on us almost two hundred pages of fine writing, musical sentiment, rhymes of the seasons, from all of which emerges the portrait of a gracious idealist.

Mr. C. L. Graves continues to illustrate the art of punning with a purpose. He lays his parodist's pen over Shelley's "Skylark," to evolve,

"Hail to thee, blest oyster":

he calls the gallery's esteemed attention to "Edith, Osbert and Sacha" (to rhyme with "pasha") at intervals: he has detected the mention among the more offensively advanced moderns of Freud, Wells, and Marx. But why does he protest that he would "sooner study Milton than hearken to Jack Hylton"? Surely in his epoch everyone studied Milton in the course of nature?

## THE PROBLEM OF DR. HENDERSON

**Five Roman Emperors.** By BERNARD W. HENDERSON. (Cambridge University Press. 21s.)

A NEW work by Dr. Henderson presents a difficult problem to the reviewer. So few books appear in English on the history of the early Empire, and those few so rarely do justice, to say the least, to the interest of their subject, that it is hard not to recommend an author who has laboured long and assiduously to popularize the study of Roman history, and, in spite of the incurable preciousness and *gaminerie* of his style, is such entertaining reading. On the other hand, it is no secret that Dr. Henderson is not regarded as an authoritative Roman historian, nor that his writings have been stigmatized by the erudite as sometimes deficient in knowledge of the facts, sometimes wildly fanciful in interpreting them, and rarely, if ever, suitable reading for the uninitiated.

Yet this book especially it is very difficult not to receive with acclamation. Dr. Henderson's five Emperors—Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan—have never been treated in English save in the uninspiring sketchiness of a compendious history. Their reigns are momentous and packed with incident. A present-day historian of the period, moreover, has to narrate two of the most brilliant, and least known, successes of modern scholarship, the German excavation of the Roman frontier-lines beyond the Rhine, and the reconstruction of the story of Trajan's Dacian campaigns from the scenes carved on the Trajan Column at Rome, a work comparable in achievement to an historical account of the Norman Conquest derived solely from the authority of the Bayeux Tapestry. And the very size and magnificence of his subject prevents Dr. Henderson from spinning those webs of exegetical theory for which his book on the civil wars of sixty-nine was so notorious; for the most part, he is content to expound and criticize, with much sound common sense, the theories of others. The faithful critic, however, must admit that the sporadic deficiency of his knowledge of the facts is as apparent as ever. We may assume that his bestowal on Domitian of the honour of appointing Agricola to Britain, his eighty miles from Como to Milan, his Legio XVIII. Primigenia (an entirely non-existent legion, which reappears in the Index), are slips of the pen or the proof-reader. But there is an account, several pages in length, of the attitude towards their deification adopted by successive Emperors; and not a word is said in this connection of what is the crux of the whole question, the institution of Cæsar-worship in the provinces, a deliberate act of policy intended to stabilize the Empire by providing its dissonant elements with a common religion. Again, in his section on the growing absolutism of the Empire, Dr. Henderson lays great stress on Vespasian's tenure of the censorship, the point being that the censors could create and expel senators, and had thus almost complete control over the Senate's composition. But Vespasian's censorship was at any rate perfectly con-

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stitutional ; he acted with a colleague, and he laid down the office at the end of the normal eighteen months (for Dr. Henderson is wrong in supposing that he remained censor for the whole of his reign). What was quite unconstitutional and without precedent was, first, that Vespasian created senators before ever he had assumed the censorship, while he was still in the East and technically a private citizen, and, secondly, that Domitian, in his turn, though he used the censorial title, retained the office for life and, worst of all, without a colleague. Dr. Henderson mentions neither of these points. Again, there is an account of the disposition of the legions in Cappadocia. The modern authorities are cited, including the great Ritterling, the most authoritative of them all. It is therefore surprising to find Dr. Henderson ignoring completely the plausible suggestion of Ritterling that the XVI. Flavia, Vespasian's new legion, formed part of the garrison of Cappadocia during his reign. The examples given are perhaps enough to show that in a discussion of a question by Dr. Henderson, it not infrequently happens that the most important point is overlooked entirely.

So that the problem of how far he can properly be recommended remains. Perhaps the easiest solution may be deduced from a simple parallel. The present reviewer is profoundly ignorant of many of the matters discussed in this book, the German frontier-lines, for instance. He has read what is written of them there with deep interest and enjoyment ; but he would not dream of accepting a word as correct without the most rigorous independent examination.

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### THE PROBLEM OF CHINA

**China and the Powers.** By H. K. NORTON. (Allen & Unwin. 15s.)

IN our opinion, this is the best book upon China which has been published for many years. Mr. Norton is a deadly enemy to catchwords, political war cries, and hasty generalizations. He reviews the Chinese situation empirically, and tries to ascertain the Chinese policies to which the Great Powers are bound by tradition and interest ; and he examines the reaction towards those policies which is taking place in modern China, with equal detachment. Great Britain—the champion of the occident—is naturally the bulwark of European commercial interests in China. Japan—the champion of the orient—is driven by economic and military necessities, which however Mr. Norton judges to be inclinations rather than necessities, to take an exceptional interest in the political stability and economic development of Manchuria. The foundations of America's policy are purely commercial. Supposing, as a result of a slight economic development, China could buy annually, twopence worth of American goods per head of population, then, every year, eight hundred million pennies would find their way into American pockets. The prospect is dazzling, and the project realizable, if only American diplomacy can prevent other Powers from establishing a political dominion over China. American missions, schools, colleges, and philanthropic societies in China, are lock-up investments in what may, later on, be a really good concern.

Mr. Norton has little respect for the student movement. It does not express a national sentiment, and is mere mob passion become vocal ; the attitude of the Chinese intelligentsia towards the Shanghai incidents is typical of its inconsistencies. "Six of the students were killed. It was a signal for a terrific outburst of anger against the foreigner. The slaying of thousands in the meaningless wars of the tuchuns, the drowning of thousands in China's preventable floods, the starving of thousands in China's undernourished families, the dying of thousands from disease in China's unsanitary villages, all were mere trifles compared to the shooting of those six students."

Mr. Norton is probably right when he states that the present turmoil in China is caused by the industrial revolution, and that the agitation against unequal treaties, and foreign privileges, is no more than the upper effervescence of a deep-seated fermentation. It is, indeed, only by concentrating our attention upon the basic causes of the trouble in China, that we can get any guidance with regard to the future. The Chinese empire, as described in the sixteenth century by such writers as le Comte, Baudier, and others, provoked a gasp of admiration from all Europe. Europeans heard of a country where nobody except soldiers were armed, where governors were selected by competitive examination in philosophy and letters, where there was no hereditary nobility, where education was free and universal. It seemed incredible that such wisdom should exist upon the face of the earth. The admiration was just, because Chinese polity, of those days, did effectually provide against the evils from which Europe suffered. This admiration has survived the centuries. The Chinese are still expected to show exceptional wisdom, and nobody can quite understand why they persistently behave like fools. Will they, however, recover their old talent for ordered government? Are the cardinal principles of their ancient civilization applicable to those ways of life, and those habits of thought, that are being imposed upon a world driven to uniformity of life by the uniformity of its occupations? It would be the merest dogmatism to answer such questions outright ; they are best restated as contingencies. If the moral principles of Confucian philosophy and ancestor worship can be applied remedially to an industrial population ; if a governing class, recruited by the old Chinese system, can be re-established to organize and control mines, railways, and industries ; if a society in which the family is the unit, can make and work more machinery, extract more coal and iron from the earth, and produce more electric current than a society in which the individual is the unit ; then, a few hundred years hence, Europe may again be expressing its admiration for what Voltaire was pleased to call an empire founded upon virtue. If Chinese society must be remodelled before China can undertake the duties of a modern State, then Chinese turmoil has only begun.


**GEOFFREY BLES**

With more than usual optimism I am looking forward to this Autumn season, for I happen to have an exceptionally fine list of Eagle books (and last Autumn, you may remember, *The Observer* said that I had "one of the most taking of Publishers' lists").

"**FILMS : FACTS AND FORECASTS**" is a fine book on the history, development and prospects of the Motion Picture Industry by *L'Estrange Fawcett*, the Dramatic Critic of *The Morning Post*. Mr. Fawcett has studied the problems of "this film business" at Los Angeles, in New York and in Berlin where he was shown wonderful new devices for scene-setting, lighting, etc. Altogether a most interesting book, illustrated with about 40 excellent photographs. (21s. net.)

"**THE BLACK JOURNEY**" by *G. M. Haardt* and *Louis Audouin-Dubreuil* (16s. net), is an account of the great Citroën expedition across Africa from Morocco to the Belgian Congo and thence eastward to Lake Victoria and Madagascar. Pygmies, cannibals, dancing-girls and strange beasts *fera nature* lie in wait for the reader on almost every page.

*George Dilnot*, whose "**SCOTLAND YARD**" is still a big "seller," has followed up this success with a new book, "**GREAT DETECTIVES**" (16s. net), which throws a new light on some of the most interesting Scotland Yard cases of recent years.

*Mr. Dilnot* is also acting as General Editor of a series of Famous Trials, which will include not only the leading British trials, but also noteworthy trials on the Continent and in the United States. The first four volumes will be (1) "**THE THAW CASE**," edited by *F. A. Mackenzie*, the author of "**WORLD FAMOUS CRIMES**"; (2) "**THE TRIAL OF PATRICK MAHON**," with an introduction by *Edgar Wallace*; (3) "**THE TRIAL OF PROFESSOR WEBSTER**" (a famous American case, which established the principle that medical men should not practice vivisection on their creditors); and (4) "**THE PELTZER CASE**," one of the most bizarre of Continental crimes. Each volume will be Demy 8vo, illustrated and published at 10s. 6d. net.

"**THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE**" by *Richard Halliburton* (16s. net) is a worthy successor to "**The Royal Road to Romance**," which has become a "best-seller" in America. In this new book young Richard describes his attempts to follow the wanderings of Ulysses in the Mediterranean (not excluding encounters with Circe and Calypso)—together with a few *pavera*, such as swimming the Hellespont and running the Marathon. It is written in the same adventurous and joyous strain as "**THE ROYAL ROAD TO ROMANCE**," of which a second edition is now ready.

"**BRIGHTER FRENCH** (For BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ALREADY KNOW SOME)" by *H. T. R.* (5s. net) may come as a shock to those who identify the learning of French with the acquisition of inept information about "the gardener" and "the gardener's wife"; but it will be welcomed by many who want to put a final polish on their French.

As to Fiction, *F. E. Mills Young's* new novel, "**THE ROMANTIC TRAGEDY**" is a fine story of the Diamond Diggings in South Africa, which the author visited last winter.

"**WHAT WOMEN FEAR**" by *Florence Riddell* will, I think, be one of the big successes this Autumn. Her last novel "**KISMET IN KENYA**" which I published in the Spring, is now well into its second large edition.

"**MARIPOSA ON THE WAY**," by *Henry Baclein*, is a charming novel which will delight the many admirers of this witty and imaginative writer. "**THE ROYAL CRAVATS**," by *Lillian Rogers*, describes very cleverly the struggles of a family of Russian immigrants in New York. "**DEEP FURROWS**," by *Robert W. Ritchie*, is a fine tale of a man's fall and regeneration. The scene is laid in the orchards of California. "**PARADISE ISLAND**," by *Mark Caywood*, gives the exciting (and romantic) adventures of a Sydney stockbroker in the Southern Seas; and "**TERROR AT STAUPS HOUSE**," by *Frank King*, is a real "thriller."

At the popular price of 3s. 6d. net I am bringing out "**THE HAT PIN MURDER**," a fine new detective story by *George Dilnot*, author of "**THE CROOK'S GAME**," etc.; and "**THE HUMAN TOUCH**," stories of life in a big London hospital, by *Philip Iman*.

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## DR. CANNAN PROTESTS

**An Economist's Protest.** By EDWIN CANNAN. (King. 16s.)

THERE were recently reviewed in these columns the "London Essays," written by former pupils of Dr. Cannan, and presented to him, on the occasion of his retirement from active teaching, as a mark of the honour and affection in which he is held. It was pointed out, in one of those essays, that Dr. Cannan, among other services to humanity, has refrained from inflicting upon it anything in the nature of a "tome." Tomes are the curse of economics. The average professional treatise, crammed as it so often is with repetition, elaboration, and argument from first principles, tends rather to blur than to emphasize the place of economics in the technique of social progress. And ordinary men and women, whose instinct it is to respect the professorial rostrum, are repelled by the reception they receive; they come, a little timidly, bringing questions for solution; they go away depressed by the enunciation of stale truisms or bemused by irrelevant dialectic. The result is that when an economist has something to say he does not, as a rule, receive the attention he deserves.

It is not against this fact that Dr. Cannan protests, save here and there by implication. But (as he tells us somewhere) he has always made it a rule not to say anything unless he has something to say. And hence such a volume as this—a collection of his various utterances, mainly upon current topics, during the war and post-war periods—is charged with a vitality and with an intensity of conviction as satisfying as they are rare. There is much in the views which Dr. Cannan holds with such tenacity, and which he expresses with such vigour, with which critics may well disagree. But his statement of them, in its freshness, its terseness, and its now Puckish and now mordant humour, is a perpetual joy.

It is not possible, in a short notice, to give a fair idea of the content of these hundred or so articles, letters, and reviews. The author's own idea of them is interesting. "They have running through them," he tells us, "only two main lines of protest, the one against what may be called economic nationalism or nationalist economics, and the other against expedients which ought to be rejected whether the ideal aimed at is nationalist or cosmopolitan. And these two are so intertwined that it is undesirable to try to keep them apart." But this statement, true as it is, gives no very clear idea of what is in the book. It does not, for example, make evident—what anyone knowing Dr. Cannan's work would naturally assume to be the case—that more than half of its contents are concerned with currency and prices.

The business of making war under modern conditions leads inevitably to monetary inflation—industrial democracy being what it is, and politicians being what they are. Not less inevitable is it, under these same circumstances, that the true character of that inflation should be misunderstood. An insidious malady, against which economic arguments provide no sure prophylaxis, will attack the body politic. No one appreciates, better than Dr. Cannan, the character of the disease. In a wilderness of speculation and rising prices, his was one of the first voices heard calling for a straightening of the paths; and year after year one could catch his accents, like those of Lewis Carroll's judge,

"Explaining the state of the law  
In a soft undercurrent of sound."

The day the gold standard was restored was, we suspect, Dr. Cannan's hour of triumph, and it is characteristic of his energetic whole-hearted belief in old-fashioned remedies for old-fashioned diseases that he has not, as far as we know, protested against any of its consequences. There are those, of course, who shake their heads at such complacency, and who, in this seventh winter of unemployment, are seriously comparing the effects of the remedy with those of the disease. Mr. Wolfe, in his new translations from the Anthology, has, we are told, the following:—

"Dead! cried the surgeon, throwing down the knife,  
At least we've saved him from a cripple's life."

One cannot help wondering if Dr. Cannan, as he surveys his patient still prone under the anæsthetic, is not after all conscious of having protested too much.

## GOETHE

**The Republic of Letters. Goethe.** By J. G. ROBERTSON. (Routledge. 6s.)

MR. ROBERTSON'S "Goethe" should prove a useful book to students of German literature and the great German poet. Mr. Robertson is well acquainted with his subject, his facts are clearly and simply stated, his knowledge of the language obviously intimate. These qualities make interesting reading for the general reader also. The personal authority, however, which would make an interpretation of the great German convincing is lacking. That quality which gives the highest polish to critical works is the style, which, if one could put it so, sweeps along gathering up dislocated irrelevant facts into a whole, separating others, thrown together by chance, and co-ordinating them. Mr. Robertson's book has a text-book flavour. Too many questionings arise to allow a sweep of style and some of these could never be answered. For instance: "There is a difficulty in gauging how much serious reality there was in his passion for Anette, indeed it is not easy with any of Goethe's loves, for one can never say how much Goethe's erotic fancies were inflamed by the actual person and how much by a transfigured idea of her," and so on in the same strain for another page.

Nevertheless, human interest is kept alive throughout the volume by the revelation of the many love affairs in Goethe's long life from 1749 to 1832. From Gretchen, the calf love in Frankfort, past Lotti, Anette, Frederike, Lilli, Frau von Stein, Christiane Vulpius, whom he married, to Ulrike von Levetzow, whom he nearly married as an old man, they pass in procession before us.

Very often condensation would have made for clarity, especially when the influence of love is being traced in the Goethe poetry. Such a case is that in the chapter entitled "Indian Summer." "I have said that Marianne Willemer inspired more poetry than all Goethe's other loves together; but the reservation has to be added that a great deal of "Der Westastliche Divan" is not lyric poetry in the old sense at all. Nor can it vie with the kaleidoscopic variety of Goethe's earlier verse; it is all, as it were, in one form and key," &c.

In the discussion of the disparity between genius and achievement at the conclusion the issues break up confusedly. Goethe's "balance" is said to disqualify him from the ranks of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, whose single-mindedness was their greatness. The celebrated lines from "Faust" are given as an illustration: "Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust." "The parole went forth," says Mr. Robertson, "that greater than all his works was the life that Goethe lived." Disproving this is the dictum "Real aesthetic values are quite independent of subjective interest; a work of art must stand or fall of its own objective merit as such," but at the conclusion, "Goethe's greatest lesson is how to live" seems to revert back to the parole that went forth.

At the end is the question: "What does Goethe mean to us to-day?" Much in the one hundred and fifty volumes of his works is, as Mr. Robertson tells us, forgotten. But one that was neglected because of its symbolism, incoherence, and strangeness, has further emerged, though he has not emphasized it, into the light of day, the light of our day, where such things have a place in the sun. We refer to the second part of "Faust." Mr. Robertson truly says of "Faust": "It was a tremendous effort to harmonize the world."

Many of the best known and most beautiful Goethe lyrics are given in Mr. Robertson's book, and many of the most excellent passages in plays. He missed the wonderful: "Wer nie sein Brot mit Thränen aß, Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte," which was only touched upon. The translations keep close to the original text. We would have preferred that the rendering of "Kurz und schmal ist sein Land, massig nur, was er vermag" as "Short and narrow his land, little good can he do" had been freer.

Mr. Robertson's enthusiasm for Goethe's youth makes the earlier part of the book the finer, from the imaginative point of view. "The youth of Goethe," he says, "is the youth of genius incarnate," and "With splendid munificence Goethe flung out the masterpieces of his youth into the 'seed-

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field of time." Again the picture of the poet in his early days: "the serious and handsome youth, who in the spring of 1770 rode across the Rhine bridge into Strassburg," shows that at such moments the writer feels the thrill that Germans know at the name of Goethe. Something of that deeper knowledge is his also when he says: "Goethe's life is not merely a life—it is an epoch."

### ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

"PERSONALITIES of the Eighteenth Century," by Grace A. Murray, with a Foreword by Nigel Playfair (Heath Cranton, 10s. 6d.), is an anecdotal book about a large number of well-known and obscure persons who lived in the eighteenth century. George Whitefield, "Peter Pindar," Mrs. Macaulay, Horne Tooke, Holcroft appear among others.

"Armaments and the Non-Combatant," by E. F. Spanner (Williams & Norgate, 12s. 6d.), is an argument in favour of the thesis that command of the sea must in future pass to the country with command of the air, and that the Admiralty ought to have entire control of both naval and air forces.

A new edition has just been published of "Revolution and Reaction in Modern France," by G. Lowes Dickinson (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.).

"The Acoustics of Buildings," by A. H. Davis and G. W. C. Kaye (Bell, 15s.), is a technical discussion of the subject by two experts, both from the theoretical and practical point of view.

"London Rebuilt, 1897-1927," by Harold Clunn (Murray, 18s.), is an interesting attempt to show by description and photographs the architectural changes which have taken place in London in the last thirty years.

"Many Minds," by Maurice Hutton (Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d.), contains papers by the Principal of University College, Toronto, on subjects and writers usually connected with ancient Greece.

### NOVELS IN BRIEF

**Topsy-Turvy.** By VERNON BARTLETT. Illustrated by D. NACHSHEN. (Constable, 10s. 6d.)

As Mr. Bartlett uses the medium of the short story for the purpose of conveying his impressions of post-war Europe, it would be unfair to consider his work as an essay in the art of fiction. Our interest in his stories does not go much beyond the framework because, although he deals in real men and women, he never makes us care much for them as individuals. But the framework is extremely interesting. Without revolting us by sentimentality or exaggeration, he depicts some terrible and bizarre aspects of life. His scenes are set in Berlin and Vienna soon after the war, in Geneva at the headquarters of the League of Nations, at Genoa in the room of the Soviet delegation, at Paris in the cabarets frequented by Russian refugees, in a remote Bessarabian village, at a frontier post between Greece and Bulgaria. He peoples his scenes with journalists, politicians, prostitutes, soldiers, revolutionaries—the throng of the streets and hotels. They pass before our eyes as they come streaming out of the years of war. The French soldier returns blind; the German soldier is mortally wounded in the revolution; the prim little bourgeoisie from Metz goes to the streets; the Italian innkeeper feasts an English premier. All this is very competently if rather repetitively told. D. Nachshen's little drawings are pleasantly symbolic.

**Coming The Rose.** By ERIC SHEPHERD. (Constable, 6s.)

Mr. Shepherd's confection is extremely sweet, so sweet that many people will only be able to take a very little of it. But it is perfectly harmless and inoffensive. To be sentimental over poverty or war is a crime. But to sentimentalize over a trio like Professor Lore, Adorée, and Peter is quite permissible. The Professor is an old dear, gently shrewd; Adorée is a darling little pet; and Peter is a jolly young man, immensely wealthy. Peter falls in love with Adorée on the platform of the Gare de Lyon; he follows father and daughter to Avignon, introduces himself as a former student of the Professor's, and tours them over Provence in hired cars. Adorée is too guileless even to know what Peter is up to. There is a delicious ending. Mr. Shepherd has Meredith on the brain. The title is from "Love in the Valley," quotations from which adorn all the chapter headings. And Professor Lore, particularly in the matter of wine, bears the faintest resemblance to Professor Middleton.

### THE OWNER-DRIVER

ONCE a year one of our best-known car manufacturers asks me what the crowds at Olympia have to say. My answer to-day is that a tremendous number of people are wondering how they can join the ranks of owner-drivers without overstraining their very limited resources. That there is going to be a huge demand for very cheap cars everybody realizes, but even more insistent is the *demand for low running costs*. I have been astonished lately to find this point stressed so vigorously in letters received, and in order to satisfy a correspondent I have made a search for a few reliable figures.

A commercial traveller who in the last twelve months has covered 16,000 miles on a £160 four-seater 7 h.p. Jowett has kept accounts in minute detail, and his costs per mile work out at 1.007d. This covers depreciation (£40), 5 per cent. interest on capital, tax, insurance, driving licence, fuel, oil, tyres, replacements, repairs, and garage charges on the road.

This example is cited for the benefit of a reader who asks if one can run a car for business and pleasure at a cost not exceeding third-class railway fare. To get the Jowett costs down to 1.007d. per mile it has been necessary to spread the overhead charges (depreciation, tax, and insurance) over 16,000 miles.

By the way, there is much to be said in changing a small car at the end of a year's use for a new one. It can be done on a 25 per cent. depreciation.

The man of small means is in luck's way when he can pick and choose amongst beautiful little cars at present-day prices. We have been slow to embrace flexible coachwork, but it dominates Olympia this year, and it has an important bearing upon running costs, because there are plenty of fabric-covered saloons which weigh no more than ordinary metal-panelled touring bodies. My only fear is that manufacturers are providing *too much room* in these saloons. We are going to see five or six people on 7 and 8 h.p. chassis!

The Prince of Wales on his new Rolls-Royce retains a V-shaped windscreens with two glass panels on each side. The top panel is very deep, so that the two sheets of glass meet well *below the driver's line of vision*, but I do not think there are any smarter windscreens in the Show than those fitted with a single piece of glass, though credit must be given to the Daimler people for a V-shaped screen of exceptional merit. There is one piece of glass on each side, and it can be opened an inch or more for ventilation, or thrown wide open for driving in fog. This overcomes the only objection that can be urged against the new one-piece screen, and the details are splendidly thought out.

There are many bright ideas and many silly mistakes to be seen. Last year on examining an engine of advanced design and fine workmanship, I asked the designer where the drain plug was. Instead of admitting that he had overlooked it, he replied that with his engine it would never be necessary to drain the sump! But he has evidently changed his mind. There is a plug in the crankcase now.

Many of the exhibits are marred by small but important blemishes. One of the most expensive cars has a rear light so small and so highly placed that a large touring car immediately behind could not be seen from the driving seat. Anyone buying a landaulette or landaulette-limousine will do well to look at such points.

There has never been such wonderful value offered in the motor world, but care and discrimination on the buyer's part are essential. It is foolish to say that one cannot make a mistake in choosing a car nowadays.

There is always a danger of being led away by appearances. Bedford cord upholstery seems to make a strong appeal to ladies, but it soon soils, and is most unserviceable if the car is in everyday use. "There is nothing like leather," and for high-grade motor-cars it is ousting woven materials.

British body-builders have enhanced their reputation by the excellence of their exhibits, and I hear that one firm of car manufacturers have bought some of the finest specimens in the coachwork section with the intention of sending them to their London and provincial showrooms for the inspection of clients who are not satisfied with their standard bodies. It is a capital idea.

A very rich effect is introduced into one saloon car by the fixing of handpainted panels. With plain woodwork the price is £150 less! Principals of art schools might do worse than set their pupils to work painting panels for the interior decoration of saloon cars. There are plenty of people always ready to pay a few pounds for something artistic.

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THE HOGARTH PRESS is publishing only three works of fiction this season, and all of them have already been recognised as remarkable. They are:

**MR. BALCONY**, by C. H. B. Kitchin.  
**I SPEAK OF AFRICA**, by William Plomer.  
**THE MAN WITH SIX SENSES**, by M. Jaeger.

The whole of the first page of *T. P.'s Weekly* was given up to a review of **MR. BALCONY** by Mr. William Gerhardi, and Mr. Hartley devoted over two columns of the *Saturday Review* to it the same week. The book, says Mr. Gerhardi, "is a search for reality in life." "What a relief," says Mr. Hartley, "to find that Mr. Kitchin, an up-to-date and what is tiresomely called 'important' writer, never flinches for a moment from being amusing, if the mood takes him. . . . Mr. Kitchin's work, at once intricate and passionate, promises him a very brilliant future." Mr. Edwin Muir in his page in *The Nation* makes **I SPEAK OF AFRICA** the principal book of the week. It is one of the rare books, he says, which is good rather than merely meritorious, and Mr. Plomer "writes so well as to make even Mr. Montague's accomplished prose seem second-rate." **THE MAN WITH SIX SENSES** headed the novels reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, receives high praise from the *Manchester Guardian*, and is called an "outstanding novel" by the *Northern Echo*.

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## NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

H.M.V. RECORDS

THE H.M.V. inform us that the record made by Chaliapine of the "Farewell of Boris" and "Death of Boris" from Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounov" (12-in. record, DB934. 8s. 6d.), is the most costly ever produced, as over £5,000 was spent on recording one side alone. It is certainly a magnificent record, fine music finely sung, for it is Chaliapine at his best.

The record of Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer" was one of the most popular records ever produced, partly, no doubt, owing to the singing of the soloist, E. Lough. A serious rival to it should now be Mendelssohn's "I waited for the Lord," with the same soloist, and Mendelssohn's "O come everyone that thirsteth," sung by the Choir of the Temple Church (12-in. record, C1398. 4s. 6d.). The singing of the choir is very good. Another vocal record is "Turn ye to me" and "Onaway, awake Beloved," sung with plenty of spirit by Peter Dawson, tenor (B2561. 3s.).

No lover of Bach should miss the Italian Concerto, played on the harpsichord by Mrs. Woodhouse. It occupies three sides of two 12-in. records, the fourth side containing a charming Polonaise, March, and Musette by Bach (D1281-2. 6s. 6d. each.). Mrs. Woodhouse is a superb player of the harpsichord, and she and the instrument are here at their best. Another very fine instrumental record is by Casals playing "Gavotte tendre" of Hillelmauer and Menuet of Debussy on the 'cello with all his astonishing skill (DA862. 6s.). Renée Chemet is among the best women violinists, and she shows her skill in two pleasant, if not very exciting pieces, "Dancing Doll" of Poldini and Drola's "Souvenir" (DA811. 6s.). Mr. Cunningham plays Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 1—Finale and Lemare's "Gavotte Moderne" on the organ (B2522. 3s.).

Much the most interesting orchestral record is the Waltz Scherzo and March and Scherzo from Prokofieff's "Love of the Three Oranges," played by the London Symphony Orchestra (D1259. 6s. 6d.). Prokofieff belongs to the modern Russian school and his opera was first produced in 1921.

Lighter music is supplied by Vocal Gems from "The Bohemian Girl," by the Light Opera Company (C1382. 4s. 6d.) and Ketelbey's Chal Romano Overture, played by the Coldstream Guards (B2508. 3s.), and the following fox-trot records: "Tiny Town" and "Deep River Blues," Whitey Kaufman (B5353. 3s.), and "Gorgeous" and "There's a trick in pickin'," Nat Shilkret (B5352. 3s.).

### BRUNSWICK RECORDS

THE Brunswick records have not previously been reviewed in these columns. Technically they are extremely good, the tone both in vocal and instrumental being excellent. The best record is "Avant de quitter ces lieux," from "Faust," and "Di Provenza il mar," from "Traviata," sung by Giuseppe Danise (12-in. record, 50083. 4s. 6d.). The following are light vocal records in the modern American style, all 3s.: "You went away too far" and "Underneath the clover moon," sung by Harru Shalson (112); "Brighten my days" and "I don't want nobody but you," sung by Esther Walker (3226); "I got her off my hands" and "Following you around," sung by Chick Endor (116). Some of the dance music records are very good, particularly two from "The Girl Friend": "The Blue Room" and "The Girl Friend," fox-trots, played by the Phil Ohman and Victor Arden Orchestra (3197), and "Mountain Greenery" and "What's the use of talking?" played by Fred Elizade on the piano (109).

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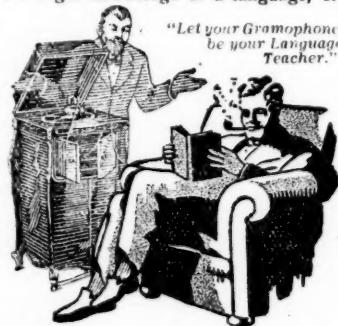
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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## MARKET FEATURES—GLANZSTOFF—RUBBER—ANGLO-PERSIAN.

ONE of the features of markets this week was the rise in Cunard shares. These fell back on the recent announcement of a bonus distribution of one share in four at par, from about 25s. 6d. to about 23s. At the beginning of this week the shares were about 23s. 9d. to 24s. 3d., and it is probable that these shares will soon be back at their former level. There is in any case an inclination to buy shipping shares, and Cunards are the favourite share in that market.

Another feature was the rapid rise at the beginning of the week in Columbia Graphophone shares. There is no doubt that this Company is doing well, but at nearly fourteen times the nominal value of the shares they are probably fairly well valued for the present. As we had anticipated, the Brazilian Loan was a big success, and there is a good market in these bonds. In the long run they will probably stand at three or four points premium. The Polish Loan was subscribed, but had nothing like the popularity of Brazil, and it is to be expected it will be obtainable at a small discount.

The introduction of Glanzstoff shares on the Stock Exchange was marked by the singing of "Deutschland über Alles," "The Watch on the Rhine," and other scenes of disorderly business. It appears to have caused dissatisfaction that Glanzstoff shares were "placed" in private hands at 6½ and then introduced in the Stock Exchange at 6 13-16. The shares take the form of bearer certificates, each representing a fifteenth part of the £15 share (or £1 nominal), and as the Company's dividends for the last two years have been at the rate of 15 per cent., the negligible yield of 2 8s. per cent. is obtained at the present price of 6 3-16. There is, of course, the prospect of some increase in dividends. In 1926, on a capital consisting of £2,100,000 Ordinary share and £30,000 Preference, the Company made a net profit of £349,149. The new issue of capital now being made will bring the capital up to £3,000,000 Ordinary shares and £45,000 Preference. This additional capital is required for the purpose of new plant to meet the demand of the German market. In the first half of 1922 imports of artificial silk into Germany were no less than 50 per cent. of the total consumption of that country.

Similar blocks of Glanzstoff shares are being introduced in Holland, Switzerland, and probably in New York and Brussels, so that an international interest will be created. The position of the Company in Germany is probably unassailable. Allied with Courtaulds, Snia Viscosa, and the Dutch "Enka" Company, Glanzstoff belongs to a group which directly and indirectly controls about 70 per cent. of the world's production of artificial silk.

Amidst the spectacular rises which have occurred in the shares of the newer artificial silk companies, Courtaulds' rise to 7½ has seemed comparatively unsensational, but if there is economic basis for half the prophecies of Dr. Dreyfus, then Courtaulds, which have plant, financial resources, and technical experience in unsurpassed degree, will benefit as greatly and much more certainly than newcomers to the industry. Snia Viscosa also have a long start, though not so long as Courtaulds, over many of their competitors. The shares have risen recently to 50s., and have fallen back to about 48s. It is known that the current year has been a good one for them from the point of view of production and sales. The first six months were undoubtedly adverse from the point of view of exchange, but this factor has not been against them during the latter part of the year. For the long view, we are of the opinion that Courtaulds still represent the best medium for serious investment in the artificial silk industry, which is clearly in its infancy.

The views of Mr. Eric Miller, chairman of Messrs. Harrisons & Crosfield, on the rubber outlook are the more significant because he sits on the Colonial Office Advisory Committee in the rubber restriction scheme. At the recent shareholders' meeting of the Company he claimed that the majority of manufacturers were as keenly interested as the producers in making the restriction scheme effective. Perhaps that was a hint that agreement had already been reached on the new restriction scheme which will come into effect on November 1st. How is the scheme to be made more effective? Mr. Miller bluntly exposed its weaknesses. This year the scheme, he said, had to bear the brunt of an extra 60,000 tons of rubber which came about as the result of over-assessments in Malaya and Ceylon, coupled with substantial smuggling out of Malaya. "The Governments concerned," he added, "must realize their duty to correct these defects." The present stock of rubber in London is generally regarded as excessive, but Mr. Miller believes that with the tightening up of assessments and the prevention of smuggling, thus making the restriction scheme effective, stocks are none too large in view of the fact that we are approaching the months of greatest manufacturing activity. This explains why Harrisons & Crosfield gave an order to their companies in the Dutch colonies to ship all available rubber stocks in September and October.

Mr. Miller cited certain facts in support of his optimism. The consumption of rubber by the American motor industry this year shows an increase of 10.5 per cent. and outside America consumption has increased by 17 per cent. In the United States there has been a 15.6 per cent. drop in the manufacture of new cars, and about 5 per cent. drop in that of new trucks. Allowance must be made, as Mr. Miller points out, for the fact that for some months the Ford Company has been virtually out of business as a manufacturer of new cars pending the change over to its new model. If the new "Ford" captures the public, the effect on rubber consumption might be startling. Mr. Miller claims that half the motor-cars in existence are Fords. It is reported from New York that 350,000 advance orders for the new "Ford" have been received (although the model is still a secret), and that 125,000 of these orders were accompanied by cash payment. For some weeks the huge Ford plants have been turning out the major parts for the new cars, and in a few day's time it is said the works will be ready for quantity assembling. The Ford engineers expect to exceed the record of 8,000 cars a day which was made two years ago with the old model. The "coming back" of Mr. Henry Ford is more than an individual drama. It may upset motor stocks in New York, and cause a revival in the rubber share market in London.

The final dividend of 7½ per cent. declared by the Anglo-Persian, making 12½ per cent. for the year, against 17½ per cent. in the previous year, was discounted in the market, and the increase in the carry-forward from £1,955,450 to £2,246,879 exceeded expectations. Making allowance for the 50 per cent. increase in capital since last year, the present dividend is the equivalent of 18½ per cent. It should, however, be realized that the present year of the Anglo-Persian will be worse than the last. The full force of the reduction in oil prices will be felt, and there seems little chance of any material improvement in the oil situation before March next year, when the Anglo-Persian year ends. Sir John Cadman's speech will, of course, be optimistic. A new chairman must take the long view, and that is always in the Anglo-Persian favour. There is also the factor of oil discoveries by the Turkish Petroleum Company.

